

ISRAEL, SCANDINAVIA & USA



MAR APREM
1 9 9 6

Atop a 14th floor Apartment in New York

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England, and America, he specialised in the field of Church History. He was the President of the Church History Association of India.

He holds two master's degree in Church History, one from the United Theological College, Bangalore (M. Th, of Serampore, 1966) and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (S. T. M. degree, 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (Th. D.) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, U. S. A. when he was made bishop in Bagdad, Iraq in 1968. Later he earned his D. Th. degree from Serampore University, near Calcutta.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961, he became a priest on the day he completed twenty five years of age on 13 June, 1965. He was consecrated Bishop on 21st September, 1968 and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later in Bagdad.

His Biography appears in the International Who's Who of intellectuals, Vol. 6, Cambridge. The International directory of distinguished leadership, first Edition, U. S. A. and others.

He was given "Men of Achievement" Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1984. and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.

Since 1968 He is the Head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organisations all over India.

ISRAEL, SCANDINAVIA & U. S. A.

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Israel, Scandinavia & U. S. A.

(A Travelogue of three trips abroad)



MAR APREM

1996

TRICHUR, KERALA, INDIA

ISRAEL, SCANDINAVIA & U. S. A.
(English) Travelogue

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CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword by Mrs. B. Huber	6
INTRODUCTION	7
Chapter 1 Israel	10
„ 2 Egypt	25
„ 3 Vienna	35
„ 4 Denmark	41
„ 5 Sweden	51
„ 6 U. S. A.	57
Photographs	97-111
Books by Dr. Mar Aprem	112

FOREWORD

The reading of the 48th book written by Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India of Church of the East has been an interesting and inspiring affair to me. He is an internationally acclaimed author who had written several books on different topics such as Church history, travelogue, humour and the such. He has readers all around the globe.

It was my privilege to be the interpreter of Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan when he had preached in the Lutheran Church in Grobenzell near Munich. He is a celebrated preacher as well as widely read writer.

This travelogue entitled *Israel, Scandinavia & U. S. A.* is a mine of information about Israel, Vienna, Denmark, Sweden and many places across the United States of America.

His simple narrative style and up to date information of men and women whom he met is useful to the readers. Indians, Assyrians, Europeans, Americans and other people irrespective of narrow parochialism are referred to in this travelogue.

Munich, Germany

Mrs. Brigitte Hube

INTRODUCTION

Pope John Paul II made 73 foreign trips between 1979 January and 1996 September. The first visit was to Dominican Republic, Mexico and Bahamas on January 1—Feb. 1, 1979. The last was on Sept. 6-7, 1996 to Hungary. How much it would have cost for these 73 trips is not known. He is the first Pontiff to have made so many foreign trips. As the Pope is 76 years old it is not sure whether he could complete 100 foreign trips during his pontificate. Perhaps he had already made 100 foreign trips if we counted the trips he had made before he was made the Pontiff in October 1978, succeeding John Paul I who was Pope for 33 days only.

Foreign trips for Church or secular leaders are not pleasure trips. We need to prepare for it to bring out the maximum benefit to the Church or state one represents.

The first trip covered in this travelogue was to Israel (Oct.-Nov. 1995). It was not a very official one. It was a pilgrimage with two priests and 15 lay people of our Church. There was also a Catholic priest (Fr. Antony Cottan Sr) from Trichur archdiocese. It was an informative trip to many. It was inspiring to all of us.

The second trip mentioned in this travelogue was in Feb.-March 1996 to Vienna. After the Pro Oriente meeting, in Vienna, I visited the Assyrians in Denmark and Sweden. It was cold, 3° centegrade below zero in all these countries.

The third trip was to the U. S. A. from May 9 to June 9, 1996. It was of a different nature. I was the main speaker

in the Mesopotamia Light Seminar III in Modesto California. Then in June I had to attend the Patriarchal Council of our Church in Chicago. It was a pleasant trip. I learned a lot, taught and relaxed a little bit.

Although a travelogue was planned immediately after return from Israel in November 1995, no time was available as I had to plunge into the unity negotiations of the two groups of our Church.

Yet I felt that such details of the Holy Land should be written down. I had published a travelogue of my pilgrimage to Israel in 1985. But that was in Malayalam *Deepika*, one of the oldest newspapers in India serialised it on Sunday supplement until February 1986 when Pope John Paul II made his historic visit to India even to Trichur, my hometown.

The second trip kept me busy. I began to write this book after the second trip. The third trip delayed its completion. Therefore I combined these trips in one travelogue. Three in one.

By condensing three trips in one book I had to omit some interesting information. Moreover, since I did not keep a diary I could not recall all details of each trip.

Some photographs are appended as usual. The selection is arbitrary. As I do not own a camera I have to depend on my hosts to send me some photographs. I had to select from those who took the trouble to send me a few photos. Some photos are not clear. Hence all places I visited in these three trips are not depicted in this book.

The quality of the photos are not good. Because offset printing in colour is expensive. Therefore my photographer in Trichur had to copy the foreign colour photos into black and white. Then I had to make blocks to be printed in the letter press.

Every time I complete a book. I ask myself, "Do you want to go through the ordeal of writing again?" Although I am tempted to avail myself of a deserving "go-slow" attitude towards writing, I shake off the lethargy and say that God does not like lazy fellows. I write as long as there is ink in my pen.

The appreciation expressed by some readers make me write more. About my last travelogue "*Salzburg to Boston*", a retired Principal of a College from Kerala Mr. P. T. Thomas wrote from Bangalore, "I have read the travel book with great interest for its racy style, its humour, and the many interesting persons who figure in it." Such unsolicited observations from others make me write more and more.

Trichur

MAR APREM

CHAPTER I

ISRAEL

On Saturday 28 October 1995 we the pilgrims to the Holy Land went to the international airport at Saha Bombay (now renamed Mumbai). As we walked up with our baggage to the screening machines we anticipated a strict security check. Then we went near the screening machine with my baggages. But when the authorities heard that we were passengers booked in an El Al flight to Tel Aviv they let us pass without the trouble of screening our baggage for security.

As I walked a foot ahead I told my fellow passengers that these Israel security people are very courteous to the pilgrims as was obvious from the way they let us move without screening our baggage. Soon we were halted. Then only we realised that we were going to face a stricter security check. Young girls on the security staff of El Al airways began to interrogate me. They asked me whether I knew all the passengers in our team. When they finished questioning me I told my team with relief "Now everything is over." A moment later to this reassurance the security staff had begun questioning each and every passenger.

After each one individually cleared all their possible doubts, to our irritation, they demanded everyone to

open their suitcases to verify whether the statements made are correct or not. The Israelis began to sense our irritation. They said that they were subjecting us to this interrogation for our own security. If there was a bomb in the gift parcel somebody had handed over to us at the airport to be delivered to his family living in Israel, all of us would die in mid air.

On Sunday morning we were in Tel Aviv airport and we had to face another spate of interrogation at our arrival. They seemed to interrogate us as though we were hardened criminals or cheats. But I cannot blame them because in their view we are criminals until we prove ourselves to be peaceful pilgrims.

We went for a look around the city. For our lunch we ate palaphel (like a chapati stuffed with vegetables.) This was the cheapest lunch we could get. We could not help equating the cost of things in terms of Indian rupee. This frugal lunch and a coca cola cost us something like Rs. 30. But it is one dollar to an American tourist.

We got into the airconditioned bus and went near the seashore. Later I realised the Catholic priest Fr. Antony Thottan was not with us. We were worried because he did not have any foreign exchange with him. We had to report to the airport back by night in order to fly to Cairo. We searched for him. Finally we went to the police station. Before we reached there he had already arrived the police station in an attempt to locate us.

This experience taught us to stay together. It is difficult to manage 18 grown people in close proximity, because tastes differ. Somebody may like to purchase

grapes. Others look for wrist watches and ornaments. Someone like me just does window shopping.

Before we emplaned to Cairo at night some of us telephoned home to inform our children of our arrival at the Holy Land. There were large queues at the telephone booths. When we realised that it was difficult to get enough coins to use the telephone for long distance calls to India we purchased telephone cards. I had to instruct and help some of them how to call home.

After spending Monday and Tuesday in Cairo we returned to Israel on Wednesday 1 November 1995. At midnight we had to stand in the queue and the immigration officials would not let us get out from the airport because they interpreted that our visa to Israel had already expired when we spent a few hours in Tel Aviv the previous Sunday. They wanted us to obtain a fresh visa to enter Israel again. Our tour operator was waiting for us outside. The long delay made us restless. Then one of the staff members at the immigration office went out and talked to our operator. I do not know whether anyone was angling for money in this "business." Anyhow both blamed each other for the delay caused after midnight in the airport.

The next morning when we were going sight-seeing I noticed that all the cars and buses had their head lights on. I enquired why they were using lights in the broad day light. The guide told us that in order to prevent traffic accidents owing to the lack of visibility Israel had introduced new traffic regulation that all vehicles should keep the lights on while driving through the main roads.

the 24 hours of the day beginning with November to the end of March. Then I saw one car coming without the lights on. When I tried to clear my doubt the guide replied that driver did not realise that it was November 1 already. He would wake up to that realisation when the traffic police would stop him and fine him for his lack of negligence in remembering the date.

From Wednesday to Friday we visited most of the places in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Dead Sea and such. We stayed in Mount Olive hotel and went by bus to see places. Compared to my 1985 pilgrimage arranged by another travel agency this trip had fewer places to travel to. But we cannot blame anyone since the guides tend to take short cuts. Further, some in the team do not walk as fast as others and therefore we could not cover all the important places. One day a couple of us were left behind while walking in the city of Jerusalem and then we had to send a search party losing precious hours. Such delays entail the leaving out of one or two places of visit in our itinerary on the route from our scheme.

Garden of Gethsamane

We visited the Garden of Gethesmane where Jesus said this last prayer. It was a thick crowd all the time. We had to keep moving to give room for other pilgrims. Some of the trees in that garden appeared to be about a 1000 years. The tourist guide made a tall claim that Jesus had knelt under the same tree.

In remembrance of the final prayer of Jesus a church was built in that garden. It is called the Church of the Holy Nations. This was built by Queen Helena, mother of

Emperor Constantine in 324 A. D. In the Middle Age the Crusaders re-built this Church. In the 20th century got its final touch by Antonio Bailuzzi the Italian architect who saw portions of the mosaic of the original Church built by Queen Helena

wailing wall

The Jewish people call the remains of the Jerusalem Temple where Jesus went the Western Wall. It was destroyed in 70 A. D. The Jews used to go there to pray. But from 1948 to 67 the Jordanians did not allow the Jews to pray there. But on 7 June 1967 the Jewish people conquered this part of Jerusalem from Jordan. Now again they pray near this wall. It is 60 feet high and 300 feet long.

12 year old Jewish boys are initiated ceremonially to their religion on this day. In May 1985 we saw a similar ceremony. We also put paper hats to cover our heads when we went inside this area. The paper hats are kept there for the tourists to wear during their visits there. In 1985 a policeman objected to the cross on my chain and asked me to cover my pectoral Cross.

I told my colleagues in this pilgrimage what guide Reena had told us in 1985. She told that they never call it a Wailing Wall. When an American tourist asked the taxi driver to take him to the wailing wall he took the tourist to a building that looked like a govt office. "What is this?" questioned the tourist. The taxi driver replied that we Jewish people cry when we have to pay heavy tax. This is the tax office which is the wailing wall, for the modern Jews!

“Dome of the Rock” is behind the Wailing Wall. We did not go there, this time. In 1985 I had visited it. There is tight security there. It is now under Muslim control. It is said to be the place where Abraham took to sacrifice his son and God intervened when Abraham was about to slaughter his son. Both Christians and the Jewish people believe that it was Isaac who was taken by his father Abraham for the sacrifice. But the Muslims deny it and insist that it was Ishmael, (the first born of Abraham, son of Hagar) who was taken by Abraham for sacrifice. In Kashmir in India some fanatical Moslems attacked the television station because *Doordarshan* (Indian T. V.) broadcast the serial called Bible stories. So the further episodes were abandoned by the Indian T. V.

el-Aqsa Mosque is in front of the Dome of the Rock. This mosque was built in 710 A. D. by Caliph ibn-Abd-al-Malik. It is on the same location where the Palace of King Solomon stood in the 10 century B.C. In 638 A. D. Caliph Omar conquered Jerusalem. He built a small mosque there. In 660 Caliph ibn abd al Malik built the present mosque. In 690 Caliph el Mamooun renovated it. While doing the mosaic work he removed the name of his predecessor and put his own name.

In 1099 Crusaders converted this mosque into a church. It is called *Templum Domini* in Latin (Temple of our Lord). In 1787 Salaudin converted it to a mosque again. Its golden dome weighed 200 tons of lead metal. Jordan government changed it into a dome of only 35 tons of Bronze and aluminium during 1958-63. After the Jews took control of this area in 1967, the administration of this mosque was entrusted to Muslim Religious Council. The Jewish people want to establish

control over it; but If they take it over the Moslems will bomb Jewish leaders. It is an explosive situation. There is always tension around this area.

The gate near the wailing wall to the Dome of the rock was locked during our visit so our guide omitted this place and led us walk to the church of the Resurrection.

Via Dolorosa

We walked through the streets where Jesus walked with the Cross. It is called *Via Dolorosa*, the way of the suffering. We saw the place where Simon the Cyrenean was forced to bear the Cross of Jesus. This road is a crowded narrow street with shops on either side of this area.

We reached the Church of Holy Sepulchre. There are long queues there. This Church enfolds the place of crucifixion, the place of the anointing of the body of Jesus, the actual tomb and the place where queen Helena found the cross of Christ. It is a big Church built by Queen Helena in 335 A. D. In 614, the Persian King Khosroe destroyed it. In 1009 Caliph Hakim burnt down this church.

In 1187 Saladin closed the second entrance to this huge Church. Later, Crusaders rebuilt this church. We prayed at the place of crucifixion as well as of the burial.

We went to see the tomb where Joseph of Arimathea was buried. It is not far from the original tomb he built for him and was used by him for the burial of Jesus. We know that the tomb of Arimathea was used by the Syria

Orthodox Church to conduct their Qurbana sometimes. I enquired about it to get permission to celebrate Qurbana on Friday. The guards said that it was not possible to celebrate Qurbana there except on a Sunday. So we searched for a historic place to celebrate Qurbana before leaving Jerusalem.

We visited Tabga where Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand men with five loaves of bread and 2 fish. Now there is a Church on that place. It is known as the Church of multiplication. We also saw the Sycamore caves where men (no women) spent their time in prayer as well as copying Bibles.

Swim in the Dead Sea was an experience. Anybody could go down into the Dead Sea. Because of the salt you will not drown. We saw the perfume factory and laboratory. Some of us purchased perfumes and medicinal soap from the mud taken from the Dead Sea.

In Bethlehem we saw the Church of the Nativity. A Christian Orthodox man who owns the Nissan shop in Bethlehem insisted that we should be shopping from his shop as he was a Christian. But our guide said that we could purchase crosses and other items from the Jewish shop as he was giving good discount. But the Christian merchant said that the Jewish merchant was offering a higher discount, after hiking the price. The Jewish guide told the driver of our bus insisted that we should do shopping from the Jewish shop which they recommended. I suspected that the Jewish merchant must have offered a commission to our guide and the driver. The Christian said, "Anyhow come and have coffee in our shop even

if you buy from the Jewish shop." We didn't go for fr coffee as we had the same in the Jewish shop fr where we bought crosses and some small articles.

On Friday 3rd November we celebrated Qurbana the hotel lobby next to the place of Ascension of Chr to heaven. When we searched for a Church, the hotel manager offered his lobby. Fr Jacob and Fr Daniel assisted me. All received Qurbana. Other guests staying in the same hotel came to see.

Joe Simcox, a really tall American working Family Apostolate in Rome under Monsignor Peter who made instant friendship with me said that he smelt incense in his upper floor and he came down with his wife Claire and children. Although his daughter Alice didn't like me his 2-year-old Peter made friendship with me.

We visited Lazar's tomb at Bethany. We saw also river Jordan. We put our feet in the water where Jesus was baptised. We also walked near the house where Peter's mother-in-law was sick in Capernaum. In the sea of Galilee we had a boat ride, and we had lunch where we ate St. Peter's fish at a cost of \$8 per head.

On Saturday the 4th of November 1995 we left Jerusalem and travelled to Nazareth. It was a happy and relaxed journey. We were scheduled to reach Nazareth in the evening and see the church on Sunday morning and leave for Tell Aviv in the afternoon. Early Monday morning we were ready to return to India

Soon after we reached the hotel in Nazareth where we were to stay I saw my friend Rev. Dr Akbar Haqq, associate evangelist of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, eating supper with his son Dr. Immanuel Haqq and Rev Ray Register, an American missionary based in Nazareth. I had seen Ray Register in 1983 at the Amsterdam Conference and in 1985 when we visited the spot where John the Baptist had baptised Jesus. Nevertheless he was surprised that I could remember his name in 1995.

I was happy to meet Dr. Haqq as we had bidden good-bye to each other in India two weeks earlier when Dr. Haqq and his son had come to India for the All India Institute of Evangelism to which I had gone to speak about the missionary activities of our forefathers in China, Japan etc from 7th & 8th centuries onwards. As a matter of fact my book *Nestorian Missions* is the summary of my lectures I had delivered in the Institute in Sat Tal the Himalayas in the year 1975.

As we were relaxing thinking about the town of Nazareth where our Lord Jesus grew up after the holy family had returned from Egypt. I looked from our hotel at the mountain top to the streets around us. The tourists were cycling in the hotel compound. This is for the first time I am seeing dozens of bicycles provided by the hotel management for the guests to cycle around for exercise and pleasure.

Sister Mercy, who was a staff nurse in our hometown, presently working in Nazareth came to see us. Since her mother was a Jew in Kerala who had migrated to Israel, sister Mercy who is a widow, decided to live in

Israel. She was happy to meet several people from Trichur where she had grown up and worked. We talk in Malayalam.

"Did you hear the news?" queried Mr. Pram Saxena, general manager of Anna Maria Travels, De which had arranged our tour. I said 'no'. He said that the Prime Minister of Israel had been assassinated. I began to worry about the consequence to the nation Israel as well as to our group. If the killer was Christian or Moslem we too may have to face serious interrogation. I checked and found out that the assassin was a Jew.

Our Israeli guide said : "We were really shocked by this tragic news. It is the first time a political leader was assassinated. You Indians are used to such news. Mr. Gandhi and her father were assassinated" I corrected her the old Gandhi who is known as the father of our nation who was shot dead by a religious fanatic on 30 January 1948 was not the father of Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister who was shot dead by her own bodyguard in October 1984 when she was not wearing her safety vest to protect her. I told him that Mrs. Gandhi's son Mr. Rajiv Gandhi too was killed in 1991 by a human bomb after he had served as Prime Minister. She said "Oh, I never heard about that".

Yizel Amir, a 27,-year-old law student was the assassin of Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel. He targeted the Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as well. The assassin told the Police :

"If both Peres and Rabin had gone down the steps at the same time, I would not have hesitated to kill them both. If it would have been easier to kill Peres, I would have shot him instead."

The feelings of the people of Israel are better summed up in the words of Yehuda Levy, President & Publisher of *The Jerusalem Post* in the statement published in the front page of *The Jerusalem Post*, dated Monday, November 6, 1995 the day of funeral.

I cry for thee, O' Israel

THE heart is bleeding, the mind is reeling, the brain refuses to believe. The thousands of years of a people's legacy, the century-long Zionist dream, and the 47 years of the rebuilding of a nation—all are dwarfed and shadowed by the abhorrent, insane act of a monstrous individual.

I weep, I mourn a man, a commander, a leader whom I knew well. Not a personal friend, not a relative. A man in whose hands this nation has trusted its destiny and fate. A fruit of this abandoned land made fertile by two millennia of yearning, nurtured by blood and sweat of the fulfillment of a nation. The salt of the earth, the manifestation of the pioneering and self sacrifice that turned the Zionist deed into a miracle.

I mourn an era of common sense, of unity and common objectives, of statesmen and leaders.

I cry for the loss of our values, inherited by others, abandoned by us; for confusing democratic and humanitarian principles with violence and anarchy, replacing civilized debates with hatred and contempt.

I am ashamed on behalf of those who gave their lives and those who dedicated a lifetime to make the State of Israel a true light unto all other nations. I cry for thee, O' Israel.

The site of the assassination in Tel Aviv was named "Yitzhak Rabin Square". To avoid political quarrels the Likud party leader Binyamin Netanyahu announced that his party would recommend to Weizmen, President of Israel that Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister be named the next Prime Minister which was done. Both were powerful leaders. But in June 1996 Netanyahu defeated Shimon Peres in a neck-to-neck fight in the Israeli election and became the Prime Minister of Israel.

The students at Bar-Ilan University where Yizel Amir the assassin was studying held a rally on Sunday with placards "Brothers Don't fight Brothers." The University put a big advertisement in P. 5 of *the Jerusalem Post* of Nov. 6 as follows ;

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

expresses deep shock, absolute horror and
utter condemnation

at the assassination of our nation's

great leader

Prime Minister

YITZHAK RABIN

The abominable murder stands in total
contradiction to the principles of Jewish
tradition and everything that Bar-Ilan University
teaches its students—tolerance,
moderation and morality.

The University extends deepest condolences
to the Rabin family

Soon after Rabin was shot he was taken to the nearby hospital in his limousine without waiting for an ambulance. Dr. Mothi Gutman, senior surgeon at Ichilov hospital, did his best to save his premier. The newspaper report is reproduced here, P2 of *Jerusalem Post* of November 6, 1995.

Gutman and his team inserted a tracheal tube and respirated him. They inserted a chest drain and administered drugs. His pulse weakly restored, Rabin was rushed 10 minutes after arrival to an operating room, where Gutman and other surgeons tried to halt the bleeding caused by damage to his lungs, spleen, tissues surrounding the heart, and the spinal column.

During the surgery, which took more than an hour, doctors gave Rabin 22 pints of blood, but couldn't save him. "If he had been, a 20-year-old man, maybe he would have had a chance of survival, but even that would have been very unlikely," Gutman said.

When we walked through the streets of Nazareth on Monday morning many shops were closed. Sunday is a working day in Israel. Sabbath holiday is on Saturday. We visited the Churches in Nazareth especially the one near the house where Jesus is believed to have lived with Mary and Joseph. The Carpenter shop is also preserved.

From Nazareth we went to Tel Aviv. After we checked in the hotel in Tel Aviv we went to the market. Some among our team wanted to purchase some gifts for their children and friends

Early next morning, we got ready to return to India. Monday Nov. 6th was the day of Rabin's funeral. The airport was to be closed to regular traffic from 6 a. m. on Monday, as leaders from 86 nations were to arrive at the airport to attend the funeral. I scrutinized the list of dignitaries such as American President Bill Clinton, Former U. S. Presidents George Bush, Jimmy Carter, British Premier John Major, Prince Charles, French President Jacques Chirac, German President Roman Herzog, Chancellor Helmut Kohl. I was disappointed not to see the name of any Indian in the list. Of course India does not rank high in importance in the estimation of Israel. Now relationship between India and Israel is gradually becoming more cordial. I am sure that somebody like the Vice President must have gone to Israel for the funeral but their newspapers didn't consider it important enough to include any Indian in their list of notables.

Our flight was originally scheduled to depart from the airport at about 5 a. m. Hence we were allowed to leave before the 6 a. m. restrictions came to effect. At the airport the security officers repeated questions whether we were carrying anything prohibited which meant bombs or guns. I felt like asking them "Why couldn't you ask Yizel Amir when he waited near the limousine of your Prime Minister on Saturday night?" If I asked such an uncomfortable question they could detain me for further interrogation. It is a sad thing that assassinations and bomb explosions take place even after we the innocent passengers are intensely interrogated to the point of irritation.

CHAPTER II

EGYPT

The Coptic Orthodox Church

We were in Cairo on 30 and 31 October. We went to a Coptic Orthodox Church. We enquired about the patriarch of that Church Pope Schenuda. I had heard about him in Pro Oriente meetings in Vienna. He had played a very active role for shaping the "Vienna Christological Statement" which became a breakthrough for future Christological dialogues including the present ongoing dialogue of Pro Oriente with the Assyrian Church of the East. Weeks after the dialogue in Vienna he was elected the Pope of Alexandria in 1971.

As this travelogue is being written an article by my friend His Grace Abba Seraphim, Metropolitan of Glastonbury in England, reached me by post. In "Renewal of Coptic Orthodox in the Twentieth Century", *The Glastonbury Bulletin*, No. 92 Vol VIII, March 1996 the British Metropolitan of this Coptic Church gives very interesting information about this Church which he joined in 1994,

Pope Kurillos IV (1854-1861) is considered as the "Father of Reform." About his attempts to get religious books printed the following narration is informative p. 143, 144

At that time the only printed materials were produced by the government's press at Bulaq and Pope Kyrillos obtained permission from Muhammad Ali's son, the lenient and merciful Khedive Saïd Pasha (1854-1863), to import a printing press from Europe and to have four young Copts trained at his expense, at the government's printing works. When the press eventually arrived at Cairo station the Pope instructed the priests and deacons to conduct it to the Patriarchate in solemn procession wearing vestments and chanting the Ep-Oro, the special hymn of welcome usually reserved for bishops and the pope! When criticisms of the reception reached the Pope's ears he confounded them by stating that had he himself been present he would have danced before it as King David had danced before the Ark! From this press there so flowed a constant stream of liturgical, biblical and doctrinal booklets in Arabic and Coptic to replace the scarce manuscripts previously only available to a limited few.

It will be useful for bishops even today to read the following account how a patriarch in the middle of the last century assisted in equipping his clergy to face the challenges of their vocation. p. 144

During his papacy churches and monasteries were repaired and the Cathedral of St. Mark in Ezbekia, which had been started some half a century before, was brought to completion. Priests were summoned to Cairo for instruction and the Pope himself conducted regular Sunday meetings for their instruction. To assist him he assembled

a skilled team of priests to offer instruction in traditional Coptic music and liturgy as well as the more mundane skills of book keeping and proper church registers. From his time dates the introduction of the diaconal choir to lead the people in their congregational responses.

Pope Kyrillos IV was sent in 1856 by his government to negotiate with the Ethiopian Emperor on the vexed issue of disputed borders between Ethiopia and Egypt. It was a successful embassy of eighteen months. Unfortunately in 1861 at the age of 45 the patriarch suddenly died. Some people suspect that he was poisoned by the government.

About the progress made by Pope Kyrillos IV, Mar Saphim quotes Dr. Aziz Atiya a layman of the same church. pp. 144, 145.

“The fact remains that the impetus given by Kyrillos IV produced the most felicitous results in building up an enlightened and progressive laity, whereas the clergy unfortunately lagged behind the flock. Thus we begin to perceive a kind of imbalance within Coptic society, which explains the gathering clouds of a new battle between constitutionalism and conservatism.”

After Kyrillos IV, Demetius II was the Pope from 1862-70. When Pope Demetius died a Community Religious Council (*Maglis Milli*) was organized in 1874 with 24 members elected every four years. This was to transfer the temporalities of the Church from the clergy to the educated laity. The Coptic Church had educated

laity. Boutros Gali was the only Christian to become the Prime Minister of Egypt. This only Christian Minister was assassinated. Now another Boutros Ghali, the Secretary General of the United Nations, is also a Copt, a minority in the vast Muslim population in the land of the Pharaohs.

Kyrillos V was made Pope in November 1874. He declined to attend the *Maglis Milli*. He insisted on the control of the *Waqfs*, religious endowments. In 1899 the government exiled the patriarch to the Baramonastery.

What happened in the last decade of the last century in Egypt could happen anywhere in current times if religious leaders are not cautious. In P 146 we read.

This dangerous precedent inviting government intervention in church affairs was later used against the Coptic Church when the Egyptian government wanted to neuter an outspoken Pope. Pope Kyrillos responded by excommunicating the bishop and his supporters and a stalemate was reached which caused profound divisions in the community. A new cabinet eventually reversed the decree and the Pope after only five months in exile, not only returned to Cairo in triumph but was actually awarded a decoration by the government. By a mixture of stubbornness and subtle diplomacy the Pope eventually obtained the repeal of legislation which had restricted his rights in favour of the *Maglis Milli* and kept the reforms at bay almost to the end of his papacy.

Pope Kurilos V was a spiritual man. He had £35,000 per year from the revenues of the Patriarchate. He had another £80,000 from the monastic revenues. Yet he did not waste money "in exalting of his office." He chose to live a frugal existence on not more than a £60 a year, and used all the rest of the money on building schools and repairing Churches and monasteries. He was pope for the poor. About him is written "*But for luxury, that display which so generally appeals to the mortal, when he has the opportunity of asserting his authority, he shows a supreme indifference.*"

In 1927 Pope Kyrillos V died at the ripe age of 103 after an unusually long term of 53 years. Pope Yoannia succeeded him, some say King Fuad I personally witnessed his election. This patriarch died in 1942. He was succeeded by Macarios III, aged 72 years. He died after a pontificate of one-and-a-half years. His pontificate and of his predecessor's did not do much good to the Church. It was a period of, according to the Coptic Church historian Dr. Atiya, "*sterility and absence of constructive policies in Church affairs.*"

In June 1946 Pope Yusab II was elected. As there was a strike by public transport workers on the election day, Abba Yusab's partisans were transported to the election by army vehicles procured on his behalf by an influential army colonel. The new patriarch denied the demands of Maglis Milli over the waqfs.

The reading of the following comment about his pontificate saddens me. It is reproduced here so that the bishops and the laity be vigilant to avoid such

occurrence. Such state of affairs will definitely destroy the Church. (P. 151)

This pontificate was soon characterised by a great public scandal as the Pope's unscrupulous personal assistant, Melek, was given a free hand by his weak and vacillating master to indulge in simony and corruption. One authority reckoned that sixteen of the nineteen episcopal appointments made during this period involved financial considerations! The Pope seemed deaf to all entreaties and when Melek was sent away for a period, his recall only four months later exasperated those who hoped to restore order and left them despairing of the Pope. The government was not slow to exploit the situation to gain control over the waqfs and other areas of family matters which had previously been under ecclesiastical control.

Pope Yusab II was exiled to El-Muharraq monastery from September 1955 till his death in November 1956.

From 1956 to March 1971 Kurillos VI ruled the Church. He solved the problem of waqfs. He helped to bring educated men to be clergy.

His private secretary Abba Schenuda succeeded him on his death. Pope Schenuda III gives leadership for the education of clergy and the laity. Pope Kyrillos VI was a spiritual man. He rose daily at 3-30 a. m. to sing the divine office, and to celebrate the Eucharist. He revived the Vespers which had generally disappeared. Comparing Kyrillos VI to his successor Schenuda III, we read P. 15

Unlike Pope Shenouda, he was not a great preacher or a prolific writer, but his humility, potent prayers, gift of knowledge, word of wisdom and constant miracles, both in life and in death, have effectively ensured his canonisation by acclamation.

Pope Shenouda is setting a record in consecrating bishops. The number of bishops was 26 in 1964 but it rose to 35 in 1977. Now it is over 70. His policy is to have as many bishops as they had during the Middle Ages.

The Coptic Church sent a delegation to the World Council of Churches in its assembly at Evanston, near Chicago. It was the second assembly of the W. C. C., the first one was in Amsterdam. Ever since 1954 this ancient church is active in the W. C. C. At present Patriarch Shenouda is one of the Presidents of the W. C. C. This Church is also active in the Middle East Council of Churches.

The estimated membership of the Coptic Orthodox Church is around seven million which is 95.2% of the total Christian community in Egypt. The Catholic Copts and the Protestants number around a hundred thousand each.

I asked whether I could meet Pope Shenouda. The people at the Coptic Church enquired and informed me that the Patriarch was abroad on a two weeks visit. Thus I missed a chance to meet one of the most colourful and powerful leaders in the Christendom today.

One of the quotations used in the article on *Glastonbury Bulletin* has made me think of my Church. The quotation is thought provoking to all ancient Churches faced with the challenges of modern situation. The quotation is from Bishop Antiochus Marcos. pp. 155,156.

“Is the Coptic Church today, in this generation, a Shepherding Church only, or a Proclaiming Church? Or are both of these duties inseparable duties that the Church must carry together? If this is the role of the Church, what then is the specific role every Coptic Christian in fulfilling God’s plan for the whole world?”

Places of interest

In Cairo we visited historical places and Museum the papyrus factory, market etc. At Giza we saw the famous pyramids and Sphinx. We bought colour picture postcards of their important historic places Cairo, Giza etc. The postcards we bought had beautiful pictures of a limestone statue of Ramses II, 19th Dynasty 1292 B. C., Painted limestone bust of Queen Nefertiti, The Great Sphinx and Keops pyramid Giza; wonder boat used by Cheops made by Cedar wood dated 2600 B. C. (length 43.40 meters and width 5.66 meters). The Sphinx of Sakkara in Giza, King Zosers step pyramid Sakkara, The Arab camel traders in front of the pyramid in Giza, The Golden mask Tut Ankh Amoun, Abou Simbel Rock Temple of Ramsis II and such. Another postcard with greetings from Egypt had four pictures 1. Stanley Beach in Alexandria 2. Pyramid of Keops illuminated by night 3. The Sphinx in Giza illuminated by night

River Nile and El Tahrir Bridge. These postcards remind me of the scenic sights we had seen during the 40 days in the land of the Pharaohs.

In the papyrus factory we were shown how paper is made from papyrus. They sell the genuine papyrus there with a certificate of authenticity. Outside in the streets we purchased "papyrus" cheaper; but they are "duplicates", a word well known in oriental markets. The tourists buy some of them thinking to be genuine.

Some parts of Cairo looked like Bombay or Madras. But the city of Cairo and the whole of Egypt has a great past. Some parts of the city are green from the water of Nile river that runs through the city. We were promised dinner in the boat in the River Nile. Later it was substituted by a supper in a restaurant. Some of our group demanded dinner in the Nile River. Later, realising the expense our tour operator would have to incur for it he relented.

We walked through the Pyramid street in Cairo from the hotel. About 500 high school children came running, crossing the crowded street shouting 'Amitab Bachan,' The famous film star Amitab Bachan had acted in a movie sporting a beard. A theatre in Cairo was showing that movie. Looking at my beard the youngsters sensed some similarity of the bearded face of their hero with mine. When the traffic police found it difficult to control the students he told me to leave and politely obliged him.

Salaudin's Mosque is a landmark in Cairo. And so there were many tourists there. When we went I noticed

that some American lady tourists were wearing green gowns. These green uniforms of these American ladies intrigued me. Later I understood that these gowns were given to them when they entered the mosque because the miniskirts were taboo to the Muslim religion. Women were required to cover their bodies.

When we came out of the mosque we noticed some priests and people coming in. They told us that they were priests and deacons of the Coptic Church outside Cairo. They were photographed with our pilgrims from Trichur. They enquired about our ancient Church. Some people say that the Copts do not like our congregations. But my experience is otherwise.

Egyptian Tourism Department must be congratulated for developing handicrafts which are attractive to tourists. I found one papyrus bookmark I bought very useful. It has a descriptive map of Egypt on one side and Hieroglyphic Alphabet on the other. Each country can develop tourism as well as handicrafts and provide employment.

We also visited the famous museum in Cairo where mummies of Pharaohs are preserved. There is a great rush of tourists and students. The vendors stand near the entrance of all historic places and try to sell their wares at prices higher than usual. Things worth ten Egyptian pounds are sold for even fifty pounds.

At the carpet weaving factory we saw young boys enthusiastically weaving carpets. Some boys are only six or seven years old. But it is not called factory. It is a weaving school. Their products are taken upstairs and sold at exorbitant prices making huge profit for the owner of the school-cum-factory.

CHAPTER III

VIENNA

I had mentioned about Vienna and its significance in my travelogue *Germany Via Vienna* published in 1991 as well as *Salzburg to Boston* published in 1995. This chapter therefore is made brief to avoid repetitions.

The visit to Vienna was to read a paper at the Consultation as well as the Syriac Commission meeting of Pro-Oriente from Feb. 22 to 27. It was my fourth visit to Vienna.

When my plane landed in Vienna airport I saw a white country. It was the first time after I had become bishop that I saw snow. I had seen snow during two winter seasons during my studies in New York and Princeton during 1966-68. I had seen snow also during my studies in England in 1961-62. But during the 27 foreign trips in the last 20 years I have never seen snow. I used to avoid trips in Nov-Feb months. I had been in Vienna in Feb of 1995. At that time snow had already melted. But in February 1996 I saw snow. It was like a white Christmas. In Europe such snow was unusual at the end of February.

I opened my bag; took out socks and put it on. When I emplaned in Bombay, I was wearing sandals

as I do not like to wear shoes. But I had carried in my bag a pair of shoes in case the cold became unbearable. As soon as I saw snow I knew that even my shoes and socks would not protect me, properly from the biting cold.

My friend bought me a pair of gloves because he saw me walking with my hands in the pockets of my cassock. I boasted that India is a better country to live because we do not need gloves, socks and shoes. Here I had to cover even my ears when walking. To my disadvantage my accommodation was in a building which needed a 15 minute walk to reach. I decided to face the challenge and walked faster than others and made in 12 minutes. Fortunately my exposure to minus 3 degree celsius weather did not make me sick. I felt healthy. Although I was worrying whether I would catch common cold in that below zero weather, to my pleasant surprise I did not sneeze even once.

As soon as I reached Bildunghaus at 138 Lainzer strasse where the Pro-Oriente programmes are usually held I was told that I could leave my baggage at the reception and rush to the meeting hall as I was scheduled to speak within a few minutes. So without waiting for a room assignment I rushed to the hall. Within a few minutes of my arrival the Chairman asked me whether I was ready to read my paper. I was tired of nearly one full day's travel from Kerala to Bombay and then to Europe. Yet I read my paper.

The participants from the Assyrian Church of the East to this 2nd Syriac Consultation were the following

1. Mar Narsai de Baz. Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria & Europe.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India.

Bishop Mar Bawai Soro, of U. S. A. Doing doctorate in Rome.

Bishop Odisho Oraham, Norsborg, Sweden.

Archdeacon Yonan Youel Yonan from Hanwell, London, U, K.

Protopresbyter Michael J Birnie from Seattle, Washington, U. S. A.

In addition to my paper Bishop Bawai Soro who is one of the Co-Chairmen read a paper (Does Ephesus Unite or Divide?) Protopresbyter Michael J. Birnie, a non-Assyrian scholar from Seattle, U. S. A. read a paper on "The Church of the East & the Question of Theodore of Mopsuestia." In his paper he quoted Mar Nersai, the head of the school of Nisibis describing Theodore of Mopsuestia as follows

"It is right to call him Doctor of doctors

All who have grown rich were made to abound
from the Treasury of his writings,

And from the commentaries they acquired the
knowledge to interpret

I learned from him too - I, who learned to stammer -

And by his acquaintance I acquired an
acquaintance with the study of words"

Dr. Sebastian Brock, the celebrated Syriac scholar at Oxford, summarised the papers of the first consultation held in Vienna in June 1994. Of course Bishop Bawai, Michael Birnie and I had presented papers in the first consultation also. As a matter of fact the participants of the 2nd consultation were the same people who were present in the first consultation with the difference that Bishop Odisho Oraham was only a priest when he was present in June 1994. He was consecrated Bishop after the first Vienna consultation. It is not an

exaggeration to observe that many delegates who attended Pro-Oriente consultation have been promoted as bishops, archbishops and Patriarchs after they returned from Vienna. Pope Shenouda III, the Coptic Patriarch is an example. Now after 1996 Consultation Paul Sayyah of the Maronite Church has become a bishop.

Some of the recommendations of the Syrian Consultation of Feb. 1996 are as follows.

1. The establishment of regional and /or international projects (facilitated by Pro Oriente) that encourage pastoral and liturgical collaboration between Churches of the Syriac Tradition
2. The study of the sacraments in the Churches of the Syriac Tradition,
3. The study of pastoral situations, in the Middle East, India and Diaspora, among the Churches of the Syriac Tradition that constitute obstacles for the ecumenical relations.
4. The study of ecclesiological issues between Churches of the Syriac Tradition that presently prevent them from re-establishing full ecclesial communion
5. The study of concepts and models for re-establishing full ecclesial communion between the Churches of the Syriac Tradition.
6. The study of the place of the Bishop of Rome in the re-united Church
7. The significance of the Ecumenical Councils and their reception and the question of lifting anathemata on all sides. (The findings of Pro Oriente and other current dialogues could be utilized)
8. The continuation of the study of the person and teachings of Nestorius of Constantinople and Theodore of Mopsuestia.
9. Collaboration with M. E. C. C.

As a book consisting of the papers, recommendations, Cammunique are in the process of printing, further details are not necessary in this narrative. The official report of this un-official Consultation will be better than my own observations which will be much more official. Any serious student of this Syriac Commission at the Pro Oriente will find it useful to read the official reports of the Pro Oriente. The book on the first Consultation was widely circulated in English and Arabic. A new volume on the 2nd Consultation is expected to be ready before the 3rd Syriac Consultation scheduled to be held in St. Mary of the Lake Seminary at Mundelein, Chicago.

A very difficult problem was the interpretation of the word *Qnoma*. In June 1994 Consultation Dr. Brock suggested that we should not translate the Assyrian *qnomā* as hypostasis. We should transliterate it as there is no suitable equivalent in other languages. In the Feb. 1996 (2nd Consultation) Dr. Brock suggested that "*Qnoma* can be translated as 'individualized, but not personalized nature'" we have to discuss and see whether such an explanation will satisfy the Copts.

One interesting event in the meeting was the declaration of Bishop Amba Bishoi that he would definitely oppose the Assyrians, if they did not condemn Nestorius. We said that we could drop the anathemas against Cyril of Alexandria if the Alexandrians reciprocate by dropping the anathemas against Nestorius.

Although Bishop Amba Bishoi appeared to be a hostile person theologically, I found him a good friend personally. As it was the great Lent he noticed that I did not eat egg, fish, milk etc. like him. He gave some nuts to me to take to my room and eat to have some sustenance to keep me alive in the Lent season. I am convinced that through personal friendship we can even break down the walls of misunderstanding accumulated since our unfortunate days of June 431 A. D. when Cyril and

Nestorius condemned each other. I value his friend much more than the peanuts he gave me. In political circles we hear about dinner diplomacy. Here is peanut-diplomacy!

Rev. Dr K V. Mathew, former Principal of ThomaTheological Seminary in Kottayam, was a delegate for the first time to represent the Mar Thoma Syrian Church which is a reformed Eastern Church of Syrian tradition. He had to get back to his hostel, in Bildinghaus from our place. It was a Sunday night and he did not know his way back. The bus which brought him had left. He was alone. We suggested that he should sleep in our house and go to his place the next morning. But he wanted to return the same night. I walked with him and returned to my place. A good walk of about 24 minutes both ways. Next day he told me that in the West bishops are only served unto by the priests. For a change he experienced a priest was served unto by a bishop.

I also visited my friend Magister Ludwig Niesberger and his wife. It was my home when I made my first trip to Vienna in 1990. It is strange how it develops friendship with people living in different continents.

While writing this chapter I wanted to find out the full title of my friend Bishop Amba Bishoi. I checked *ORTHODOXIA* 1996 published by the Eastern Church Institute, Regensburg, which is a very useful guide regarding genuine bishops. There are many especially in the West who claim to be bishops of the Eastern Church. This directory helps us to find out whether such claims are correct or not. I checked Bishop Amba Bishoi in pages 58-68, not to verify his genuineness, but to know his full title. He is known all over the ecumenical world as the trusted emissary of his Patriarch Pope Schenuda III.

I was amused and amazed to know that there are also bishops in the Coptic Church with the same name.

CHAPTER IV

Denmark

My visit to the Assyrian Congregation of Mar Mari in Aarhus, Denmark was from February 29 to March 8, 1996. I was on a two-week visit to our Churches in Denmark and Sweden after reading a paper at the Pro Oriente Consultation held in Vienna on Feb. 22 to 27.

I was received at the Aarhus airport by Qasha William Yacoub of Gothenburg, Sweden and the two Deacons of Denmark namely Dadeesho Khoshaba and Albert Phaneemon. There were about twenty Assyrians including the President of Committee of Mar Mari parish, Fr. Michael Davodian. Rev. Dr. Morton Moebjerg, a retired priest of the Lutheran Church, was there to receive me whom he had visited in India.

On Friday March 1, I spoke to the students at the Højskole in Randers near Aarhus. In my speech I spoke about the St. Thomas Christians in India and the Assyrian Christians in Denmark. There are 400 Assyrians in this country, about half of them in Copenhagen and the other half in Aarhus.

On Saturday March 2nd, holy Qurbana was conducted in *Lishana Athieqa* by me at Skjoldhøj Kirke at Randers. Qasha William Yakob and Shamasha Dadisho

and Shamasha Albert assisted. About 225 Assyrians attended the Qurbana. Some members of the Choir of the Gothenburg parish came from Sweden to join the Choir of their brethren. After Qurbana Qaddisha, there was breakfast and I spoke about our Church in India.

On Sunday 3rd March I spoke at the High Mass at the Cathedral (Domkirke) about the Church in India and about the Assyrian Christians in Denmark. The retired Bishop and the former Dean of the Cathedral met me. The present Dean of the Cathedral Fr Yacob welcomed me. Several Assyrians attended this service.

On Sunday evening a "Lima Liturgy" was celebrated in the Lutheran Church at Rastad when the Roman Catholic priest participated along with the Lutheran pastor. Qasha William read the gospel and I preached the sermon. The final benediction was given in Aramaic language. In the coffee hour after this ecumenical liturgy I spoke about the Assyrian Church in India and abroad.

On Monday I spoke at Gymnasiebesog (High School). The same evening there was reception meeting in my honour by the Assyrian congregation of Mar Mari in Aarhus area. I spoke about the history of the Assyrian Church and answered questions.

On Tuesday I was received by the Principal of the Ronde hojskole. The next day I was received by the Principal Rev. Thomson at the Praesten-hojskolen (Training College for priests) at Logumkloster, about 200 kms from Aarhus. I talked about the Assyrian Church in India and the whole world. The Lutheran pastors who

and come there for a one-month training and study were interested to hear about the existence of our ancient church in many parts of the world.

On Thursday 7th March was the guest lecture at the University of Aarhus. Professor Johannes Aagaard welcomed me at the Department of Systematic Theology mentioning the fact that former Danish Ambassador to India, Prof. Kaj Baago was guide to the thesis which I wrote on the Council of Ephesus of 431 A. D.

In the 'guest Lecture' at the University I spoke about the Council of Ephesus, King Abgar of Edessa and the Assyrian Christians of the 1st century in Edessa and in India. Scholars from various Departments in the University were present to listen to the first scholar from the Assyrian Church of the East to speak at the University of Aarhus. I also spoke about the Common Christological Declaration signed by H. H. Pope John II and H. H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East.

On Friday March 8 the Assyrians were again at the Aarhus airport to see off their Metropolitan from India as he was going to Sweden for another week. In Denmark my visit was a new inspiration to the Assyrians. The events were reported in the religious and secular newspapers. The *Presqala Athoraya d' Madnkha* broadcast an interview with me. The newspaper in Randers had a detailed article about the Assyrians with a colour photograph of mine.

Information on the Assyrians was made available on the internet at the computers in Danish language. People

outside Denmark also began to enquire about this ancient Church. Some Danish young people expressed a desire to work as "Volunteers" in the Indian Church of the East for short periods.

Rev. William Yakob

Qasha William was a shamasha when he assisted me for Qurbana in 1984 at Jonkoping. I had mentioned about him in my book *From Bagdad to Chicago* in which I had included my visit to Sweden, as my visit to Sweden was on my way to Chicago. I had expressed my satisfaction that Shamasha William was studying in a Methodist Seminary not to become a Methodist, but to study about our own faith systematically. We will get a scholarly and critical approach. We will have opportunity to read what others have done in way of translation from the great fathers of our Church. The writings of our holy fathers are not known in the outside world as there are only a few translations and even the translations in English are not widely used, in the theological institutions in the west.

"Have you read Mar Aprem's hymn against Bar-Daisan?" asked Qasha William. I could not easily recall whether I had read it and even if I had read it in the libraries, I did not have a copy. He said, "Don't worry. I will send you a copy. It is in the computer." As promised, before I reached Sweden a packet of this material had been posted in my address at Norsborg. In addition to three pages of *St. Ephraim of Syria, A Hymn Against Bar-Daisan*, there were 13 pages of *The Pearl Seven Hymns on the Faith* by St. Ephraim of Syria Translated by J. B. Morris, re-edited by John Gwynn.

Both these materials were copied from the Saint Pachomius Orthodox Library. I do not know where the Saint Pachomius Orthodox library is. When they entered the material on the computer in May 1995 they had added a prayer. "O Lord, remember Thy servants Rev. Morris and Rev. Gwynn, the translators, and have mercy upon the scribes Maurice, Jeff, Mark, William, the Reader, Brian, Steven, Clay-Edward, Christopher, Laurence and Alan." I guess these names mentioned are of the people in England. St Ephrem the Syrian never went to England. But his poems in Syriac were translated to English and published all over the world. The computer information reads, "This document is in the public domain. Copying it is encouraged." I imagine that the following words will help those who care to retrieve it from the computers [/www.wo.c.f.org/Orthodox/reading/St.Pachomius/Syrian/pearl.html](http://www.wo.c.f.org/Orthodox/reading/St.Pachomius/Syrian/pearl.html).

Michael Davodian

The president of the committee of Mar Mari parish in Barbrand near Aarhus is an educated man. He designed "The Assyrian Alphabet" in his computer in a beautifully illustrated page each letter of the alphabet has a picture of a bird or an animal. *Alap* is for *arya* (eagle). *Beth* is for *Babga*, a parrot. *Gamla* is for camel. It is interesting for children to learn the alphabet with a picture of these animals. They learn not only a letter of the alphabet. They learn the name of an animal or bird. Children growing in Europe should love their mother tongue or father's tongue by such attractive methods.

Michael Davodian was kind enough to make my visit in Denmark a memorable. The hospitality during the *Kha*

Ramsha (Supper) in their home and the interest he shown me personally and the publications of book India are very encouraging. He feels that we would be able to do much better if I use computer at Mar Na Press

I directly asked him why he had a Russian surname. I knew Nadya Davidova of Moscow who was my guest in Thrissur. He said that his father had come from Russia. Davidova or Davodian is a Russian name from David. Yes, my father was called Devassy which is Malayalam form of David. Many people in Kerala use the form Davis for David.

The family of Michael Davodian was with me on several occasions and even at the time of my departure from Denmark at the airport. Mrs. Davodian presented me with a packet of dates (grown in Iran, as Iraqi dates are difficult to reach Denmark due to the U. N. embargo). I was tempted to finish it off during my journey to Sweden, but I was satisfied with the good dates she had given me three days earlier during dinner at their home.

Michael Davodian enquired about the architecture of old church buildings in India. As an engineer he was interested to know the plans of the old Assyrian Church in India. As I am not an engineer myself I was not able to answer his queries. I did not have the technical competence to answer questions on architecture. I should have tried to look for some information in books on Church history or of engineers who had observed the architectural aspect.

remember that the youngest brother of my friend George Menachery, editor of St. Thomas Encyclopaedia, Trichur, had obtained a Ph. D. by writing his dissertation on the topic of the architecture of the Churches in Kerala. Dr. James Menachery is an engineer by profession who took interest in the field of Church history because of his brother George Menachery who was a professor of English but studied the history of Christianity in Kerala extensively while editing the multi volume St. Thomas Encyclopaedia.

Society of St. Thomas

It will be failing in my duty if I do not record my appreciation for the hospitality of the Rev. Dr. Morton Mobjerg and his wife Brigitte. Rev. Dr. Morton is ten years older than I am. He retired some two years ago before the regular retirement age. He was the priest of the St. Thomas Church at Rasted at Randers (We have to pronounce the word as Ranners). This Church at Rasted is one of the oldest Churches in Denmark going back to the 12th century.

The Society of St. Thomas, Denmark-India, is an apostolic effort of this Danish Lutheran priest to help the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala such as Syrian Orthodox, Church of the East etc. It is only in its infancy. Dr. Morton had visited Kerala, India twice and he has been baptised in this ancient Church. Dr. Morton Mobjerg's conversion to Islam developed an interest in the Nestorian Syrian Church. He is in charge of Islam in the *Kai Baago* international Dialogue Seminar Centre in Kerala, India.

Rev. Dr. Kai Baago was my guide when I did master's degree in Bangalore during 1964-66. Later he resigned from missionary service. He loved India and worked with Danish Aid to India. Later he became Danish ambassador to India. I was happy to meet him while he was ambassador in New Delhi but soon I was saddened to hear about his sudden death following a massive heart attack.

The brother of Kai Baago and his wife, the sister of Kai Baago and her husband came to attend my guest lecture at the University of Aarhus where he was a professor. A journalist who is writing a biography of Kai Baago also came to the University in order to interview me to know my impression of my former professor. Kai Baago's sister and her husband had been at the United Theological College, Bangalore during 1971-72 where he had taught Indian religions to Indian students.

Kristelig Dagblad

This is a daily newspaper published from Copenhagen. I think the title can be translated as *Christian Daily News*. It is a standard newspaper. Jorgen Steens interviewed me and published an almost full page article entitled *Oh, indisk guru? - nej, Kristen praest*. This article dealt with the Council of Ephesus of 431 A. D. and the motif of God controversy.

Ronde Hojskole

My visit to Ronde Hojskole in March 1996 gave me an opportunity to learn something about an innovative

educational system. Mr. Henning Norhoj, the headmaster of the Hojskole at Ronde supplied me with sufficient information on Mr. N. F. S. Grundtvig, the "father of the modern high school".

Grundtvig, the founder of this school system in the first half of the last century, was not a theoretical educationist. Instead, he was a practising educationist. This visionary of a new educational system had only two years of experience as a pupil, a student at the Aarhus Cathedral school in the end of the 18th century. Having taught at home by a private teacher he became a teacher at the grammar school (14-17 year-old) in Copenhagen.

Concerning the growth of his wisdom for a new educational system, may I quote below from K. E. Bugge's article "Grundtvig's Educational ideas", 1912.

The final clarification of Grundtvig's educational ideas takes place in the course of the 1830's. The decade 1830-40 is in general a particularly fruitful period in Grundtvig's life. A number of his works were produced which posterity has come to regard as major works. In 1832 came Norse Mythology. Reckoned by some to be the most important of them all. From 1833 onwards came the comprehensive Handbook on World History I-III; in 1837 came the first volume of Grundtvig's Song-Work for the Danish Church containing some 400 hymns. In 1837 he was released from censorship and could now accept the request which had been made to him several years earlier by a group of young academics to

give a series of public lectures on history. This resulted in the famous *Within Living Memory* - lectures given at Borch's College in the summer and autumn of 1838.

About his main educational ideas Bugge summarises it as follows: pp. 216, 217.

The general content of Grundtvig's educational ideas used to be grouped under the following headings

- 1) Emphasis on *youth* - as opposed to childhood - as the real period of schooling
- 2) Emphasis on *oral* teaching, in particular the inspiration derived from the stimulating, "spirited lecture;
- 3) Emphasis on *the Danish-Norse cultural tradition* - as opposed to the classical-Latin-as the best foundation for education, and finally
- 4) that these ideas are somehow linked to *a Christian view of life*.

The "interaction" in this system can be described as "*free, living and natural*." By *natural*, Grundtvig means two lines of thought. One is to develop the existing character or nature of pupils. The other is the demand that education should respect a definite "order in nature." It is an interaction between "Light" and "Life", between education and knowledge on one hand and on the other the warmth and the love in people's nature.

CHAPTER IV

SWEDEN

On Friday March 8, 1996 I flew from Aarhus to Copenhagen. From Copenhagen towards south to Amsterdam and then towards north to Stockholm. It was better to fly from Copenhagen direct to Stockholm. But it was cheaper to return to Amsterdam and then fly to Stockholm as the hub of the KLM flights was Amsterdam.

I was received at the airport by Bishop Mar Odisho Yonan and others and taken to Norsborg where the bishop has episcopal residence. It is the headquarters of the diocese of Europe. Bishop Odisho's jurisdiction is much bigger than that of the Bishop of Sweden and many.

The Europe diocese has a total of nearly 22,000 Syrians, the majority are in Sweden and England. In addition to the Bishop there is one archdeacon (Yonan Yonan in London) and one Corepiscopa in Sweden and some priests. The 35-year-old Bishop, who was consecrated in Sydney, Australia during the session of the Holy Synod is busy travelling to Denmark, France, Germany, England etc. ordaining deacons etc., preparing for priests.

Qaroya Martin is a young 18-year-old who was ordained as a Reader recently. He is interested to study

and become an educated priest in our Church. I was invited to have dinner in his home. I was happy to meet his two sisters and parents. His father Mr. Timotheus was interested to hear about late Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan of Mar Besho village who had died in India on 30 April 1945.

On Sunday 10th March I celebrated Holy Qurban. After the service there was a reception for me. Bishop Odisho presented me a Cross and a pen to write, "as I am a writer." Bishop was printing a book for prayers of Easter. He was always busy with his computer. Shamash Samy also assisted him in his work on computer.

Qasha Antwan Latchin

The priest of Stockholm parish comes from Bagdad via Germany. He is very active and busy with the Church work. He takes care of 704 souls he has in the parish but he has to go to the neighbouring parishes in Sweden or Finland where there is no priest. Qasha Antwan says that he had met me in 1984 in Bagdad when I went to the Metropolitan's Palace of Mar Geevarghese Slivka Metropolitan of Bagdad.

He told me that he had difficulty in getting to London to be ordained as priest. He was only a deacon at that time. The Catholicos Patriarch of the Church H. H. Mar Khanania Dinkha IV was visiting the Assyrian Church in Hanwell near Ealing, London. Deacon Antwan was sojourning in Germany at that time. But when he reached Heathrow airport in London, the immigration authorities asked plenty of questions as to how much money he had with him for his stay in London. The British authorities

worried whether this young Assyrian from Iraq would stay longer and seek employment or asylum.

Deacon Antwan was tired by the many questions. He said that he would stop speaking or knowing English. He would speak only German. There is no obligation for me to learn the English man's language. If there is a language problem it should be the fault of the English man. He could go to school to learn German to question an coming from Germany. Or, he could learn Assyrian in order to question an Assyrian. Finally the Archdeacon of England, Yonan Youvel Yonan, had to plead with the migration authorities to let deacon Antwan enter the land for the sake of his ordination to priesthood.

It was a pleasure to go to the house of Almas, brother of Slievo, for supper along with Bishop Odisho, Michael Davoud, Deacon Zaia and others. I had stayed at that house in 1984 after Qurbana in Johnkoping. Despite the language problem, I enjoy fellowship with the Assyrian Christians. Had I known to speak their language it would have been much better.

The temperature was 3 degrees below zero. As it was white all around and the sea was frozen there was no activity around us. Yet one day I went out with deacon Antwan to see the city. We saw the King's Palace where the king does not usually reside. It is an official office in the city. But the king resides in a palace in the suburb. We walked in front of the Swedish Parliament building and many huge buildings in Stockholm.

Late Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan of India (1878-1945) had been to Stockholm in 1925 for the Life &

Work conference which finally led to the formation of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948. The headquarters of the W. C. C. is in Geneva. The next assembly of the W. C. C. is scheduled to meet in Harare, Zimbabwe in September 1998. Our Church is a member of the W. C. C.

In Sweden Bishop Odisho keeps very cordial relationship with Archbishop of Uppsala, head of the Lutheran Church in Sweden. Along with the Archbishop of Uppsala, Bishop Mar Odisho had an audience with the King of Sweden. His Majesty the King was interested to learn about the small Assyrian community in his country. The Assyrian immigrants can enjoy all the freedom and protection they need from the king. Of course our youngsters should prove to be dedicated of the moral and Christian values in life and should be ideal citizens. If we get drunk and create nuisance no country will welcome us. That is true of all of us.

There are Assyrians belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church (under the jurisdiction of His Holiness Mar Zakaria Patriarch of Antioch residing in Damascus) in Sodertalje in Sweden. I did not get time to visit this Assyrian community. Actually the Syrian Orthodox Church has a larger membership than our Church in Sweden. There are two prelates of that Church in the same city. Mor Julios Abdullahad Shabo is the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Skandinavia. Mor Dioskoros Beniamin Atas is the Assistant in Skandinavia. The Syrian Orthodox community in Sodertalje are active in scholarly attempts. I have met some of them in the Syriac Symposiums held once in 4 years in Europe as well as the World Syriac

ference held in St. Ephrem's Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI) Kottayam.

The Syriac Symposium in Uppsala in August 1996 is on my agenda. But as travel funds are not available for the conference I was not in a position to attend the same. I was able to participate in the previous ones in Italy (1980) Holland (1984) Louvain, Belgium (1988) Cambridge, England (1992). Therefore I was not happy to miss this Sweden conference of 1996. Let me hope to attend the next one in 2000 A. D. In the past conference, I was the only one from our Church. I feel that more from our Church whether clergy or laity should take active part in such academic conference to keep our rich heritage active. Edessa and Nisibis should not be forgotten.

Bishop Odisho did not have a TV in the Bishop's residence. But he has some good books in his library. I read some books. I was happy to read a book in Syriac written by Bishop Mar Immanuel Joseph Rehana of Canada. This book on calendar is useful. I was using an old one written by the late Rev. Qasha Joseph Mitha when I wrote the book *Nestorian Lectionary and Julian calendar*.

Bishop Odisho who had theological training in the West and is interested to do higher studies while he is still young.

The Bishop is busy building up his diocese. He has named Deacon Albert Phaneemon of Aarhus as priest

on Saturday Aug. 31, 1996. He has been ordaining Readers, sub deacons, deacons, as it is necessary for the future expansion of our Church in Europe.

Bishop was kind enough to make my return trip to India comfortable. He telephoned to his Assyrian friend in Amsterdam airport to see that I get some rest inside the Schiphol airport before I catch my flight to Bombay, India. Thus I reached Thrissur safe on Sunday March 17: after conducting a Qurbana in St. Thomas Church, Coimbatore, thus making my first visit to that parish, after the unity.

CHAPTER VI

U. S. A.

My 10th visit to the U. S. A. was from 9th May to 9th June 1996. I decided to fly via Singapore to the U. S. A. Since Singapore flight was available from Madras I chose to fly from Coimbatore to Madras. But as there was a marriage and baptisms scheduled in Bombay during my return trip on 9th June, my airline ticket was from Bombay to Singapore to San Francisco boarding at Madras. It is cheaper to fly to Madras than to Bombay for people living in South India.

There is no airport in my home town Thrissur. The nearest domestic airport is Kochi. But in monsoon the runway is sometimes full of water and flights do not land in that airport which actually belongs to the naval base there. Since I do not know how to swim it is safer for me to emplane from Coimbatore airport which is a distance of 2½ hours from Thrissur.

My five-year-visa of the U. S. A. had expired in the month of April. The U. S. Consulate in Madras had a heavy backlog of applications for visa. Although my travel agent had booked my flight I had hesitation whether I could get visa. There were people standing in queue in front of the Consulate in Madras. Finally I was given a visa for another five years, i. e., till May 2001.

On Friday 10 May 1996 we flew from Madras to Singapore by Singapore Airlines. By morning we were in Chiangi airport. Before I could move to catch the next flight I walked to the wash room and injected 20 units of insulin, my "daily bread" to control diabetes.

The flying time from Singapore to Seoul was about six hours. According to my watch, i. e., the Indian time we left Singapore at about 9 a. m. and landed at Seoul at 3 p. m. But the Korean time was 6-30 p. m. The difference in time when we reached Singapore was $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours but in Korea it was $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours ahead of us. On the contrary, if we travel west ward, when we reach Europe it is $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours behind us.

Recently I tried to explain to my church member that Europe and America are behind us. But now, on my way to the USA, I know upto Japan it is ahead us. Then we cross the dateline, one day is deducted. As a result the USA becomes behind us. Now I write these words from the aircraft about to take off from Seoul, Korea to San Francisco. It is already Friday May 10th evening. But after several hours of flying when I reach San Francisco I will realise that it is only Friday now. It is confusing even to a seasoned traveller.

It was good that the pilot asked the transit passengers to get out of the aircraft for about half an hour. It gave a chance to the ground staff to come and clean the aircraft. To us the transit passengers it was an opportunity just to walk around for a few minutes to smoke. But they could not smoke anywhere in the airport. There was a smoke room where anybody could

and smoke to his or her heart's content. How can one's heart be content with smoke is a nagging question.

Today is parents day. The Koreans changed Mother's Day to Parent's day 24 years ago. Today is 24th parent's day. I do not know whether Women's Liberation persons were behind this change. Because those Liberated women do not want special day for women only. They are as good as, or as strong as, men. The wives should be equal to their husbands. Hence in Korea on 10th May they celebrate Parents Day while Americans celebrate only Mother's Day.

We left Singapore around 12 noon, seven minutes earlier than the scheduled time of 11.40 a. m. There was a power outage in Singapore when we took off. Our flight to San Francisco is not a direct flight. We are to stop at Anchorage. That is the reason why the news on the video screen was about Korea.

An expensively printed menu card was distributed. I did not read it as I had ordered a special meal, Sea Food. Since I became bishop in 1968 I ordered strictly vegetarian food if my travel was in the 25 days before Christmas, or 50 days before Easter. Of course in the 40-day-fast of the Rogation of Ninavites I did not travel. Other days I used to order Sea Food, as I did not eat meat.

The total flight time is about five hours. The Korean time is one hour ahead of Singapore time. That means when we left Singapore around 12 noon, the time at our destination i. e., Seoul, was already 1'o clock. The co-pilot asked us to be prepared for some rough weather and suggested that we kept our seat belt on.

I was happy to hear that ours was a non-smoking flight. Most of the domestic flights all over the world had become non-smoking flights. But international flights had designated seats for smokers. The rationale behind it is that one can survive 3 or 4 hours without smoking. But habitual smokers cannot last more than 4 or 5 hours without smoking. This is a wrong notion. Many smokers have totally given up smoking. It has helped others who were indirect and innocent victims of smoking. While we stopped at Singapore an announcement was repeated that smoking was not permitted in the airport except in the smoker's room.

From Seoul we flew straight to San Francisco. It was a long flight. During this flight we crossed the date line. Therefore when we reached San Francisco it was still Friday noon, earlier than we had left which was Friday 8 p. m. in Korea.

There was no problem at San Francisco airport. When I got through the immigration area Rev. Esham Joseph and Rev. Oshana Kanon, priests in Modesto of the old calendar and the new calendar respectively received me with respect and drove me to Modesto.

It was a hat-trick for me in the sense that I was going to be a speaker in the *Mesopotamia Light* seminar for the third time. Fr. George Maloney S. J. was going to be a speaker for a second time. Prof Hamilton Hess who had spoken twice before was not there this time. Bishop Bawai Soro who was speaker in the first Seminar was not there as he had moved from California to Rome in pursuit of his doctoral studies.

The invitation to read papers at the *Mesopotamia Light Seminar III* on May 11 and 12, 1996 presented me

opportunity to visit the Assyrian congregations in the . A.

On May 11th after the Seminar at Mar Zaia Church in Modesto it was my privilege to lead the *Ramsha* (Singing) prayers in the Church. Since I was familiar with the *Ramsha* prayers from Hudra since 1954 at St. Mariyam Big Church in Thrissur, it was not a problem for me to find the pages. Actually the Hudra has not been printed at that time. We had to gather the manuscript of Hudra copied in 1611 A. D. The Hudra copied in 1598 was kept in the Metropolitan's office. Of course we had *Qdam wad wather* in our hands to read the *shuraya, onitha, sah'de* etc. Hudra was printed in 1961 after I was ordained a deacon.

After evening prayer on Saturday I went to Newark to visit Joy Mulakkan, an engineer from Thrissur. In 1994 I had visited their home, but in 1995 I did not get a chance to visit them. But Joy with his wife Saje and children Nisha and Nikhil had come to the Church. Therefore it was a pleasure for me to spend Saturday evening in their home and they came to Church next day to see me. My eldest brother's second daughter (Michelle) working in Palo Alto came to Newark to accompany me to the Church service. Then I got about an hour and a half hour in the car to talk with my niece.

On Sunday May 12th I celebrated Holy Qurbana in Mar Zaia Church. Rev. Oshana Kanon, the priest of the parish and his deacons were there. In 1984 when I celebrated Holy Qurbana at Jonkoping in Sweden Oshana Kanon had assisted me, as he was a deacon there. Deacon Edmond who assisted me now told me that he

had met me in 1984 in Sweden. He is the son-in-law of Deacon Sarkis Poulos and Shamamizdin who wrote a song of welcome to me in Sweden. It was a beautiful poem he had composed in Aramaic. When I visited Sweden in March this year I was sorry to hear that Shamasha Sarkis Poulos had passed away a few months earlier.

About 500 people received Holy Qurbana. The church in Modesto was the second largest Church, in the U. S. A., the first one being Mar Geevarghese Cathedral in Chicago.

Turlock has an Assyrian Church. Rev Badal Priest of our Church in Turlock, had attended the Seminar on Saturday at Mar Zaia Hall in Modesto. On Sunday afternoon I went to Turlock for the Seminar. But it was arranged in the Presbyterian Church. So I could not visit our Church in Turlock. Way back in 1967, while I was a young priest I saw that Church as it was the Church where the Metropolitan for India was consecrated in March 1952 by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. As the then Indian Metropolitan was not in good terms with his Patriarch as a young priest I kept away from getting involved in the power struggle.

At Turlock I was invited for supper in the house of Joash and Julie Paul who have been in Turlock for more than half a century. I had visited Joash Paul in 1967 when I was a guest of his uncle Shamasha Yuash Kellaitha who was a cousin of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan (1878-1945).

Bet Nahrain *Assyria Vision* invited me for their broadcast. It was good to meet Dr. Sargon Dadeesho who had interviewed me on his radio programme in 1988. Dr. Sargon Dadeesho is very much active in making his TV station broadcasting to many countries.

Assyria Vision

The first Assyrian Television station was inaugurated in Los Angeles, California on April 13, 1996 and the first broadcast went on air on April 14. It is channel 23 of KBSV-TV. It is a dream come true of Dr. Sargon Dadeesho M. S., Ph. D. the founder of Bet Nahrain.

Nearly one hundred thousand dollars were already spent for beginning this first Assyrian TV Station. Further financial assistance is expected to make this TV station a full-fledged one. It is bringing to fruition an eight year dream. The following paragraphs from *Bet Nahrain* Feb-May 1996 issue gives us useful information on this achievement and their aspirations for the near future.

'The coverage area of KBSV encompasses all cities in the central valley of California, mainly Stanislaus and Merced Counties (Modesto-Ceres-Turlock-Riverbank-Patterson and many other cities). Besides being UHF television station, KBSV will also be carried by local cable television systems, such as Post Newsweek Cable, Marcus Cable, Sonic Cable and TCI Cable.

The staff of KBSV-TV are working hard to add satellite programming to the station. It is estimated that within the next 12 months, KBSV

will have an UP-LINK and Down-LINK Satellite capability. The satellite set-up will make KBSV programs available for watching throughout the United States and other countries. Bet-Nahrain will eventually be able to reach all Assyrian communities in the world through its radio and television network!!!

Bet-Nahrain has entered into special arrangements with several production agencies, video libraries, and other television production studios in the United States and other countries to supply KBSV with pre-taped programs. The Assyrian crew of KBSV-TV and KBES-FM consists of volunteers from Bet-Nahrain membership. This dedicated crew is supported by volunteers from the Assyrian community who have donated their time, money, and talent to make the dream a reality. KBSV-TV commenced its broadcasts during the same week Bet-Nahrain celebrated its 22nd founding anniversary. We salute the staff of KBSV and members of Bet-Nahrain, *THE FEW, THE PROUD*, for their historic accomplishments."

The local community in Ceres was excited about the new venture. The *Ceres Courier* dated April 12, 1995 had a lengthy article captioned *Assyria-Vision fires up Sunday*. A few extracts from that newspaper is informative.

"Dadeesho doesn't appear too nervous about flipping on the switch to the station for the first time. He's had 19 year's experience at the center television studio where weekly programs are produced for telecast around the world.

More than 14 cities in the United States including Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington D. C. and San Jose, air Bet-Nahrain's syndicated program. The weekly program also is seen in Sweden, Australia, Northern Iraq and Canada.

"The weekly program is really seen by a lot of Assyrians through out the world on a weekly basis," said Dadesho.

Termed "Assyria-Vision," the non-commercial educational station goes on all cable television systems within Stanislaus County under a must-carry provision of federal cable television law. Dadesho said that the station will be sending out a signal over the airwaves that can be picked up as far north as Stockton and as far South as Livingston. Cable companies like Post-Newsweek in Modesto and Marcus in Ceres and Turlock merely pick up the signal, scrub it up and send it out on their network. The station is awaiting an assignment from TCI Cable of Merced for rebroadcast there.

"Even if you don't have cable you can pick it because we're a broadcast television station," said Dadeesho.

The leap to broadcast station status was not at all that traumatic. Picture stabilizers, an AV routing switcher, a 153-foot tall 15-kilowatt transmitter antenna tower and other equipment were purchased and installed. The station will have the ability to receive satellite transmissions for rebroadcast.

The Modesto Bee of the same date too had a informative article entitled *Assyrian Cultural Centre Come to television*. Modesto is close to Ceres in the Stanislaus County. Channel 23 is available in Modesto area just like Ceres. In the neighbouring towns like Riverbank Escalon and Empire it is Channel 15.

The following extracts from *The Modesto Bee* inform us:

“Dadesho described the new station as a noncommercial educational station. The programming will include cultural and educational shows in several languages, including English and Assyrian, he said.

Broadcast hours will be from 8 a. m. to 2 a. m. to start, but will expand to 24 hours a day within the next six months, said Dadesho. The Assyrian cultural Center hopes to offer air time to churches, nonprofit and ethnic groups and offer local, national and international programming via a satellite feed.

Cable operators in the area are required to carry the new station under the Federal Communications Commission's “must carry” rules, which has caused them to bump other programming to find room for it, said Ken Berns, manager of Post-Newsweek Cable in Modesto.

The “must carry” rule says a local cable system must carry stations that are locally originated if the station wants to be on the system.”

The TV station was inaugurated by Barbara Hinton, Mayor of Ceres. Mayors of neighbouring cities and political leaders and officials attended the inaugural function. April 14 was declared as Assyrian Day in Stanislaus County by the Board of Supervisors. Similar proclamations were issued by the mayors and city councils of Ceres, Modesto, Turlock, Riverbank and Oakdale. This was a rare honour to the Assyrian community.

Qasha Badal Piro of Turlock, Qasha Oshana Kanon of Modesto, Rev. Shmouel Es-haq of the Assyrian Evangelical Church are some of the Assyrian clergymen who were present for inauguration.

His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, sent his message of blessing for this new TV station. I do not think any Assyrian bishop or Metropolitan has visited here, the Assyrian station, until I was interviewed on 13 May.

On 13th May a member of our Church in Trichur, Dr. Davy Emmatty M. Sc., Ph.D. took me to his house in Stockton.

Dr. Davy Emmatty is in the U. S. A. since 1963.

When I was in Stockton with Davy and Gracy Emmatty, Fr. Dimitry Grekov came and took me to his church near Sacramento. Saint Barnabas the Apostle Church is at 8990 Grove Street, Elk Grove, California 95624. This Church is a small one with an office in the lobby and separate hall for Sunday school and other functions.

The Sacramento parish is a non-Assyrian parish. The service is conducted in English. Fr. Dimitri Grekov is very interested to keep our ancient tradition in this Church. But it is impossible to conduct liturgy in Aramaic or Assyrian, because it is like Greek and Latin to these non-Assyrians. It is a small parish. It is a separate parish from other Assyrian parishes in California. It is under the episcopal supervision of Bishop Mar Bawa Soro who is doing his doctorate in Rome. The only other parish that comes in this category is the one at Seattle, Washington in the North West U. S. A.

The Seattle parish is an English speaking non-Assyrian Congregation. But their priest Chorepiscopa Michael Birnie has learned Aramaic well and translated *Synodicon Orientale*, the Synods of our Church. I am sure that the non-Assyrian clergy too can learn Aramaic and learn the history and doctrine of our Church. They can translate them into English and explain to the Roman Catholic or Protestant scholars who do not know Aramaic and hence no access to the rich heritage of our fathers.

From Sacramento and Stockton Dr. Davy Emmatty drove me for one hour distance where my eldest brother Jose Mookan was to pick me up. Therefore before midnight we could reach Santa Barbara where my brother is working as an Associate Scientist in a Chemical factory.

The next day we drove to San Diego where his daughter Mia and her husband Tony reside. My brother's wife Laloo too was there at Escondido, suburb of San Diego.

At San Diego my brother's family friends came for a supper. Most of those who were in San Diego last year

ely Dr. K. I. Verghese and Omana, and Dr. Mathen and Molly were there. This year too I did not come alone, as his wife Roshni was busy with children.

On 19 May we went to Orange County, near Los Angeles for Qurbana. Qasha Kando Kando had begun the (morning) prayer, at 9 a. m. He had planned to conclude it at 9-30 a. m. and be ready to receive me upon arrival. But we were not sure how much time it would take to travel from San Diego. We made an early start. Therefore we had to participate in the prayer and get ready for Qurbana to start at exact 10 a. m. and to conclude at 12 noon. The breakfast and get-together after Qurbana started at One o' clock.

The Priest's wife introduced herself stating that I am the brother of Mar Aprem. I did not ask the usual question which my fellow bishops and clergy ask "which Mar Aprem? Of India or of Chicago?" I didn't have to ask the question because I knew for sure that she was not my sister!

"Kando Kando" in Malayalam means "Did you see? Did you see?" When I explained this meaning to Qasha Kando we had a hearty laugh. His Church is not a large one, as the neighbouring one at Los Angeles where Fr. Na Barkho is the priest. Some repair is going on in this Church. That may be the reason why I was directed to this one by Rev. Oshena Kanon when I told him that I would like to celebrate in a Church near San Diego as I was visiting my brother's family.

San Diego is going to have a parish. At present it is a mission where occasional Holy Qurbana is conducted. Perhaps by next year it may grow as a full parish. There

are more Chaldeans in San Diego than Assyrians. Nevertheless, there is good co-operation there. Every Sunday from 10 to 11 p. m. there is an Assyrian TV show in which programmes from other places such as Detroit, Chicago, Modesto etc were broadcast. I watched it in San Diego. That is the only Assyrian TV show I watched in my life!

Qasha Frederick Hermiz from Phoenix, Arizona came all the way to Orange county to participate in the Holy Qurbana. He invited me to his Church in Phoenix, Arizona. I have never been to Arizona and hence I was interested. But usually I do not change the programme on the way. Hence I promised to visit him during my next visit.

On 20th May I flew from San Diego to Newark, New Jersey via Denver. At Denver we were allowed to walk out of the aircraft for about an hour. It is a blessing for the smokers. But in the open space in the airport nobody was allowed to smoke. I think some airports have a small room for smokers to quench their thirst for smoke before they got into the aircraft.

I must warn less-experienced travellers and travel agents that Newark is not New York. My agent had written in my ticket that the flight was to New York. I believed him because I had known Newark, N. J. as a small airport. That was when I was studying at Princeton, New Jersey. It was 28 years ago.

When I checked with the United Airlines by which I was flying I realised that New York was a mistake. If it were New York they would specify whether it was

= Kennedy airport or La Guardia. Since neither of these names of these airports are mentioned it was definitely Newark in New Jersey (not far from New York). I told Geevarghese Emmatty to wait for me in Newark instead of the usual J. F. Kennedy airport in New York. It was okay with him, because it was shorter for him who is living in Bergenfield, New Jersey.

During the stay with Geevarghese Emmatty I could meet John (Valsan) Thermadom, Samuel Panenchery, Mathew Bryn & Tennyson, John and Surma, Ignatius & George Nallengara, Puthoran Davy & Sicily, Raphael & George, Dr. Mrs. Loolu Mookan, Dr. James Raphael & George. Most of them came for Qurbana on Sunday at 10 o'clock.

On 26 May, Pentecost day I celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. Mar Mari Church of the East at 129 Beuna Vista Ave., Yonkers, N. Y. 10701. The present Qasha, Dmitri Khandan was happy to welcome me although I was meeting him for the first time. Mr Ivan Mirza, an active man, told me that he had read most of my books and wanted to buy what he did not possess.

I told the congregation that I was present for the Qurbana in 1967 arranged in honour of Bishop Mar Yonan Dinkha, episcopa of Iran. I was a priest studying for S. T. M. degree in New York. In my speech I predicted that the next Patriarch of our Church would be the young bishop. (The bishop was not yet 32 years of age at that time). Years later in October 1976 when the bishop of Iran became the Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East somebody asked me how could I

prophecy such a thing, in Yonkers in 1967. Incidentally at Patriarchal cell in Chicago His Holiness showed the photograph taken at that meeting. It took some time for me to recognize my young face and real black beard in that photograph.

In my speech I recalled Miss Lily Jacobs and Deacon Khono Shimun who had invited me to sit at the head table to welcome the bishop from Iran, as there was no priest in Yonkers. Both had passed away. Yet there were some there who had remembered that dinner meeting nearly 29 years ago.

In May 1977 I had gone to Yonkers to meet with Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis to speak about unity of the two groups. Rev. Athanasius (now co-episcopa at Mar Sargis Church, Chicago) was with the bishop. The late Dr. Deacon C. J. Chacko and his wife Dr. Dorothy Chacko were with me along with a young engineer from Trichur Mr. Mathew Chackola. Mathew Chackola (whom we call Babu) was in Trichur in December 1977 and expressed his satisfaction in the unity we achieved in the Indian Church. It took more than 18 years to materialise the unity talks we had at Yonkers in 1977.

Rev. Geevarghese Thoma, priest of our St. Thomas parish in New Britain, Connecticut came to Yonkers before our breakfast was over. He invited me to his parish, which is one of the earliest parishes like Flint Michigan. As I did not have any Sunday left in my schedule I gave a hope to him that I would do Quiba in his parish next year. He is one of the five members of our Mixed Dialogue Committee with the Vatican. He is expecting to get his Ph. D. from Hartford next year.

Fr. M. K. Kuriakose is a priest in the Indian Orthodox Syrian Church. He had done an M. Th. degree in Church History from the United Theological College, Bangalore where I had done my M. Th. and D. Th. Fr. Kuriakose got excellent training as an archivist and a librarian. Some x years ago he left Bangalore and is working in New Jersey as librarian and at week-ends as the Vicar of an Indian Orthodox parish in Philadelphia. He was staying near to the house of Geevarghese Emmatty where I was staying. In my previous visits I did not know it. This time I had dinner with him one night when we talked about U. T. College, Bangalore till after midnight. Usually I do not get chance to chat with my college or Seminary friends.

On Monday 27 May I flew from Newark to O'hare in Chicago. Bishop Aprim Khamis and others were at the airport to receive me. I stayed with him and the Catholicos Patriarch in Morton Grove for the following ten days till my departure from the U. S. A.

Within hours of my arrival at the Patriarchate, T. P. Lazar and his wife Ammini rang me up. They were frantically trying different telephone numbers to reach me at the Patriarchate. Although before I flew from New Jersey he had telephoned me to know the details of my flight so that he could be at O' Hare airport in Chicago to receive me. I advised him not to go to the airport to receive me as Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis would make arrangements for it.

It was a pleasure to meet Lazar who was a good football (in India it means soccer) player. He was a member of the Chaldean Syrian High School team. Now

he lives in Chicago where his wife Ammini is working as a nurse in a hospital. Many Indian nurses have helped their husbands to find a prosperous living in the U. S. A. It is true in Germany too. These Christian nurses from Kerala have a good reputation among their peers, whether in the United States or in Germany.

Lazar is personally known to Bishop Mar Aprin Khamis and His Holiness the Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. His Holiness asked a candid question, "Lazar, I have not seen you after Mar Timotheus was here some years ago. Where were you?" The only excuse he could say, "I cannot understand Assyrian language. So I go to the Kerala Qurbana of the Indian Syrian Christians who celebrate our liturgy in Malayalam," Yes, Syro-Malabar Christians use the liturgy of Mar Adhai and Mar Mari just like Chaldeans in Iraq, but in Malayalam, our native tongue. People prefer to understand what they are supposed to supplicate to the Lord during the worship. His Holiness the Patriarch suggested a solution that Lazar should attend the English service in the St. John the Baptist Church where Fr. Charles Klutz is the vicar.

St. John's Assyrian Church

This is an American Church of second generation Assyrians. Their former pastor Rev. Sadok de Mar Shimun was a second or a third cousin of the late Mar Eshai Shimun Patriarch. Qasha Sadok came to Chicago more than half a century ago as the priest of the only Assyrian parish in Chicago. Unfortunately soon he and his patriarch became enemies. Litigations continued.

Years later, in 1960s Qasha Sadok supported Mar Thoma Darmo and worked for the establishment of a rival

atriarch outside hereditary family of Mar Shimun. I met him for the first time in 1967 when I was travelling westward to Seattle, Washington in the summer of 1967 between my S. T. M. studies in New York and Th. D. studies in Princeton, New Jersey. After Mar Thoma's death on 7 Sept 1969 at Bagdad, Qasha Sadok asked to think of me as his Metropolitan.

That is the reason why during my visit to the U. S. A. after becoming Metropolitan, he arranged for me to do Qurbana in his Church. That was in April 1977, ten years after my first visit to Chicago. I saw him in 1984 in Chicago. He was concerned about the future of his Church after his death.

It is a wise decision that this congregation decided to be a part of the Assyrian Church of the East. They have a non-Assyrian priest Fr. Charles Klutz who speaks some sort of modern Assyrian. This congregation is different from other congregations in the U. S. A. It has an identity of its own.

I had the pleasure of meeting with the congregation members after 19 years. I had conducted Qurbana for the first time in that altar in April 1977. I could not fit in a Sunday Qurbana in my tight schedule. But our evening prayer meeting and tea together on Tuesday 28th May was a time of renewing old friendship. Although I could not recognize them, they did recognize me. Their present pastor Fr. Charles Klutz ought to be commended for the excellent leadership he is providing for the spiritual nurture of this Assyrian American congregation. I agreed to conduct Qurbana in their Church in June 1997 when I would be in Chicago for the meeting of the Holy Synod.

This is a very nice *ma'pra* explained Fr. Klutz showing the white *mapra* in his vestry. This is comfortable one to use. He praised the qualities of the white cotton *ma'pra* as a salesman would speak to promote products of his company. He remarked that he has never seen such a good *mapra* anywhere.

"Do you know where it is made?" I queried. He replied that he had no clue. Then I revealed to him that it was stitched in Trichur and was probably left here either by Mar Poulouse episcopa who had consecrated that altar some 22 years ago or by myself who had celebrated a Qurba there for Easter, 19 years earlier. I could easily detect Indian-made *mapra* from the poor (not Pure) quality of the cloth and somewhat the same standard of stitching.

Deacon Lawrance Namato

Fr. Charles Klutz earlier took me to the house of Lawrance Namate who is his deacon in the St. John Church. More than a sumptuous Assyrian dinner Deacon Namate's wife had prepared for me, Fr. Klutz and Fr. Aprem of Syria I was happy to be in his home to browse at the books he had collected. Being a computer expert in his secular profession, he developed a C. D. Rom entitled *Teach Yourself Modern Syriac*.

Shamasha Lawrance Namato brought his computer and demonstrated it to me. I could not only read the lessons but also I could hear the sound. As the public leaflet claims we can 'learn how to read & write easily' quickly various word dictation and pronunciation exercises, build listening, speaking & writing skills. Each cassette costs only \$49.95 each. But one needs a computer in order to use this C. D. Rom. His computer costs \$4000, i. e. 140 thousand rupees (Rs 35 per dollar

Since I do not own a computer I am not interested to have a C. D. Cassette. But I record it here for those interested to learn modern Assyrian. They can write to Sarhaddon Productions Inc., 428 E. Clarendon Drive, Round Lake Beach, Illinois 60073. I understand he has plans to produce another cassette to teach Aramaic, i. e. *shana Athieqa*. I gave permission to use my book *Teach Yourself Aramaic* for the purpose.

Dr. Isho Marcus came to the Patriarchate on the same day after Deacon Namato had demonstrated his C. D. Rom. Dr. Isho Marcus had come to repair or upgrade (I am trying to learn the technical terms used in the computers) these Assyrian programmes used at the Patriarchate. Dr. Marcus, who is a dentist by profession, is a pioneer in creating Assyrian programmes for the computers. He has been working day and night to improve the quality.

Mar Sargis Church

I had heard about Mar Sargis Church in Chicago for a long time. In recent years after the Mar Geevarghese Church was purchased in the same city, the prominence of this parish is lost. In membership and in size Mar Sargis Church is only No. 2 Assyrian parish in Chicago.

As I was scheduled to do Qurbana in the larger church on the only Sunday available for me in Chicago, i. e., 2 June I was waiting for an opportunity to visit that church where Qasha Athanasius Joseph was the vicar. I had met him in 1977 with Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis at Tonawanda, New York.

Friday of gold (*eruvtha d' dahva*) was on May 31. That was an opportunity for me to do a Qurbana at that Church. Rev. Athanasius talked with the Patriarch and obtained okay for this proposal. I was warned that there would not be many people to attend the Church on a Friday as people are busy working.

Shamasha Sham picked me up from the Patriarchate on Friday morning. I asked the deacon whether his name was spelt Sham or Shame. He explained that he spells his name without the last 'e'. Still the pronunciation sounded like Shame. I suggested that he change it to Shem instead of Sham. Anyhow he does not feel any shame to be called Shem or Sham.. His name Shem is that of the eldest of the three sons of Noah, born to him after Noah was 500 years old. Shem was the father of Arpa'xad who, according to Metropolitan Solomon of Basrah of 13th century (author of *Debboritha*, the Book of the Bee), was the grandfather of Melchizedek, the famous "fatherless" personality, (the priest king of Salem who greeted Abraham in the Valley of Shaveh (Genesis 14:18-20). The name of Shem is mentioned in Genesis 5:32, 10:1, 1 Chronicles 1:4 and Luke 3:36.

My joy was without limit when I met the widow of my Aramaic teacher (Malpan) Kaku Lazar who was deacon when he taught me in Trichur in 1955-57. He was priest of the Mar Zaiya Cathedral in Karradat Mariam in Baghdad in 1962 when I stayed with him. He had taken me to meet Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan (died July 1977), Mar Esho Sargis Episcopa (died 1967) and the Mar Yokannan Philipose Episcopa, consecrated bishop in 1954 for Iran but was still living in Baghdad. I was with him for the funeral service of the mother of Mar

Qasha Sargis (grand mother of the present Mar Yosip Sargis), recited the *Madrasha* during the funeral in the cemetery in Bagdad.

The history of our Church for the past 41 years unfolded before me when I thought of Malpan Kaku Lazar. On 21 September 1968 after I was consecrated bishop in Mar Zaya Cathedral I looked to the parsonage where I had stayed with my Malpan six years earlier. When some people told me that Kaku Lazar had been ousted from the parsonage by the government of President Ahmed al Bekr. Some children from the priest's family were standing in a neighbouring building. That was a sorrowful experience. How much do we Christians hate each other?

Qasha Kaku Lazar went to England and later served our Church in Canada and the U. S. A. He was an archdeacon, the highest rank a married clergyman can occupy in our Church. He deserved such a highest rank. His humility did not allow him to reveal the fact that he was one of the great Aramaic scholars in our century.

Qasha Joseph Kelaita of Mosul, Deacon Geevarghese Benyamin (finally at Chicago) and Archdacon Kaku Lazar could be counted a trio in our century among the Aramaic scholars. Among the prelates of our Church Mar Yosif Hananishu Metropolitan was No. 1. But all these scholars have departed from this world. It is a challenge to the living to keep the language of Jesus *Iishana Athieqa* live. I have been tempted often to stop writing travelogue and joke books and to devote more time to be a real scholar in the language of Jesus.

When I registered for a second doctorate I did it in the Department of Languages, Syriac studies in Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam. At the same time being aware of my limitations in the linguistic studies I am writing my dissertation on the historical aspect of the Assyrian Church. My present knowledge is a help to study the present history of the Assyrian Church. The title of this Ph. D. thesis is "The history of the Assyrian Church of the East in the 20th century with special reference to the Syriac literature in Kerala."

Mariam, daughter of Archdeacon Kaku Lazar, was there to serve us breakfast in the Church hall after Qurbana. She and her mother must have felt proud because Kaku Lazar's student did the Qurbana in the language of Jesus. Qasha Athanasius, Bishop Aprim Khamis and others who were present there expressed their appreciation that I did the service in a dignified manner.

Mar Geevarghese Church

This huge Church at 7201 N, Ashland Blvd is a matter of pride for the Assyrian community. On Sunday 2nd June 1996 I celebrated holy Qurbana in that fully packed Church. About 1000 people received holy Qurbana from my hand. The deacon who was holding Holy bread for me was tired and changed his place with another.

Archdeacon Aprim de Baz, elder brother of Metropolitan Mar Narsai de Baz, asked me whether he should help me. As I was experienced in giving Qurbana more than, 1,000 people special occasions like May 1st in India, I did not have much difficulty. But we have started giving Qurbana in two or three sets simultaneously

on special occasions when more than thousand people communicate. It saves time. Instead of one hour for giving the holy elements to the people we could do that part in 20 minutes. Yet the whole service takes more than two hours. In India in some parishes we begin on 7 a. m. and conclude at 9 a. m. In some other parishes we begin at 7. 30 and conclude by 9. 30 a. m.

I had hoped to read the evangelion (Gospel) in modern Syriac. But the Patriarch had suggested that I better read it in English or *lishana athieqa*. I chose the Lord's language. But I had to switch to English to preach. It is easy to read but not easy to speak. At the same time some people prefer to learn to speak instead of reading, because it is difficult to master the alphabets in certain languages.

Sumptuous breakfast was served in the balcony after the Qurbana. Indians were invited to join me along with Mar Narsai Metropolitan, Bishop Aprim Khamis, Bishop Meelis Zaia and the clergy. T. P. Lazar and his wife Ammini were there. My sister Mrs. Leela Alex flew from Columbus, Ohio to attend the service. Her daughter Asha and her American husband Paul were there. Although there are about twenty families from Trichur in the USA they are scattered in different states.

Patriarchate

My stay at the episcopal residence at Morton Grove was indeed comfortable. It is the official residence for Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. In addition to Bishop Mar Aprim, His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV is also staying there. It is a quiet and pleasant neighbourhood. Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia and myself stayed there.

His Holiness the Patriarch showed me the photo which was taken in Yonkers when I was 27 and he was 32 years of age. There is a lot of difference. I am 56 and he is 61 now. Patriarch walks for an hour daily to keep fit in his health. I know a brisk walk is essential to keep fit, especially for all of us who do not do much manual labour.

During my stay with His Holiness I could talk with him on many matters. My knowledge of our Church in Iran is very limited, as I have never been there. But His Holiness is fully competent to tell us about Iran. Because while he was a young priest he was sent from Iraq to Iran. Later in January 1962 when Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun visited Iran, Qasha Khanania was consecrated by the name Mar Dinkha. The new bishop was only 26½ years old. He remained in that post until he was consecrated as Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East, one month after he had completed 41 years of age. The minimum canonical age for a person to become a Patriarch is 40.

When I presented my book *Teach Yourself Aramaic* to His Holiness he quickly detected one mistake. He said "the word *Kepa* has an 'alap' after 'K'. It is not pronounced but it has to be written. I do not remember whether it was a mistake in my manuscript or a printer's devil committed at the time of hand composing that word for printing. I had corrected some such minor errors in the second edition, printed in an off-set machine. I cannot explain how it escaped my attention. I am grateful to all who point out our omissions or errors, not only in printing but also in actual life.

Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis

Our names are the same. The only difference in our names is that I spell mine with an 'e', while he has an "i" in his name. He is about 2½ years younger to me. He is 11½ years older than Bishop Mar Yosip Sargis who is exactly five years senior to him in consecration. Bishop Mar Aprim had completed 30 years of age at the time of his becoming a bishop. But Bishop Mar Yosip Sargis was much younger only a teen-ager, when he became a bishop after his uncle Mar Esho Sargis, episcopa of Jelu had died. Mar Esho Sargis was a mature archdeacon when he became a bishop in 1951, following the death of his uncle. Mar Zaira Sargis was very young when he had become a bishop during the time of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun who was murdered in 1918 A. D.

Bishop Mar Aprim was consecrated bishop for Basrah in 1973. But after the assassination of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun (6 November 1975) Mar Aprim moved from Iraq to the U. S. A. in 1976. He was bishop of the U. S. A. and Canada. Eight years later when Qasha Ashur Soro was consecrated bishop on 21 August 1984 as bishop of Western U. S. A., Bishop Mar Aprim's jurisdiction was restricted to the eastern U. S. A. and Canada. Nearly six years later when Rev. Archdeacon Joseph Rehana of Canada was consecrated bishop on 3 June 1990, Mar Aprim was relieved from Canada. In 1994 Mar Aprim was shifted to western U. S. A. when bishop Mar Bawai relinquished his responsibility there, when he was appointed secretary general of CIRED of our Church. Now Mar Aprim is back to Chicago. He is also assistant to the Patriarch and travels all over the U. S. A.

The pastoral concern of this bishop attracted me. He invited me to accompany him when he went to visit two families where death had occurred recently. In one case the death had occurred in Iraq. Bishop talked with them, consoled them. He advised them about reading Bible and praying and raising children in Christian discipline.

A bishop has to be a good shepherd. He has to care for his sheep at time of both joy and sorrow, in their lives. But it is not always possible for me even to keep track of the events of the 30,000 people entrusted to me. Therefore I always exhort my clergy to visit the homes of their parishioners. In some parishes there are more than 400 families, but some parishes have less than 100 families only.

My stay at the Patriarchate was indeed relaxing and comfortable. Good Assyrian food was prepared by the experienced hands of Mrs. Christina Wilson. She paid special attention to the food in order to keep my blood sugar level under control. On Saturdays when she has a "day off", her sister Mrs. Tina, who is a teacher, was there as substitute. Both sisters speak English fluently. That was also a plus point in the company of the Assyrians, who speak often their own language. The Indian people do the same in India. Late Mar Abimalek Timotheus learned our language Malayalam well during his long stay in India from Feb 1908 to April 1945. Sometimes wish we all lived before the collapse of the tower of Babel when all had spoken the same language.

"No-sugar, no-fat" ice cream was bought for me. In the evenings Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis saw to it that

ate enough and more of it. If I were a camel I could have stored more of it, in my stomach. Had the Americans invented "no-melting" ice cream the good bishop would have put it in my pocket when I was returning to India. I want to warn my readers not to consume excess quantity of ice cream even if it is the 'no-sugar' variety.

I do not watch TV usually in Trichur. I do not have a TV set. Although my well wishers went to see that a TV set is installed in the Metropolitan's Palace I tell them to wait till I am sixty and youthful enthusiasm to work during all my waking hours begins to diminish. If I am old and do not have stamina to write travelogues and joke books as well as Ph. D. dissertations, then I will be relaxing in my chair watching sports and news.

In Chicago I was not in a mood to write. Hence I relaxed in front of the TV. I realised that my namesake Mar Aprim is a basket ball fan, "These are millionaires", said Mar Aprim pointing at the tall Afro-American (that is the latest term for the "black" people in the U. S. A.) players. The description of millionaires is applicable not only to the captain or to a few smart players, but to all members of that basket ball team. I have never thought of people becoming millionaires by playing.

In the evenings from 10 p. m. to 11 p. m. I watched three stooges. It is too funny for a serious man, Nevertheless, I watched fun because I write humour. I laugh myself and make others relax. These three stooges do funny acts to make others happy. Of course, they too are millionaires, I guess. Not only the sports people, but also the people in the entertainment world do make

millions faster than the farmers and the men on regular salaried jobs. Businessmen, can make a quick buck, if he is smart and lucky.

Mar Narsai Metropolitan

Metropolitan Mar Narsai de Baz was in Chicago to attend the Patriarchal Council. He was staying with his elder brother Archdeacon Aprem de Baz. Mar Narsai is the Metropolitan of Lebanon & Syria. He has also the additional charge of Europe. He is the deputy to the Patriarch.

Mar Narsai is somewhat of my age. When we met at the Patriarchal Council on 3rd June, he had completed 56 years of age less than two weeks ago. I had ten days more to complete 56. We first met in 1984 at Ealing, London in the house of Mr. Aprim J. de Kelaita, son of the late Qasha Joseph Kelaita. The next day I attended his holy Qurbana in the Assyrian Club in Ealing where I had myself celebrated one year earlier, assisted by Deacon Bawai de Matran. We were not sure then when will we achieve unity in our Church.

In June 1994, we met in Vienna airport when we arrived from two different directions to attend the Patriarchal Oriente consultation. Will we ever unite was again a puzzle. In November 1995, he arrived in Trichur, India along with Bishop Meelis Zaia to discuss ways and means of unity. This time we were determined to find a solution. The 1995 Trichur talks were different from the 1984 London encounter.

In the London meeting the angry Assyrians who had accompanied me were talking something in an agitated

mood to justify their stand. I was a silent onlooker to that verbal duel, as I could not understand the Assyrian language. Outside, in the street the Englishmen were celebrating with the champagne at the birth of a boy to their royal couple, Charles and Diana.

In November 1995 the prelates were negotiating peace without the laymen interfering. The five prelates engaged in the unity talks put their heart and soul into it in the quest for the unity of the Church of the East in India. Mar Narsai Metropolitan added a feather to his cap by forging the unity in the Church in India, after a split of more than three decades.

In February 1996 we were again in Vienna for the Pro Oriente 2nd Consultation. Now about 3 months later we got opportunity to renew our friendship in Chicago. We are not only of the same age, but we had become bishops somewhat at the same time, he on 15 October 1968 and I on 21 September 1968. He was born 24 days before I was born, but he became bishop exactly 24 days after I became a bishop. Mar Narsai was raised to the rank of a Metropolitan in October 1976 in London when Mar Dinkha was consecrated Catholicos Patriarch.

Mar Geewarghese Sliwa

The Metropolitan of Iraq, Mar Geewarghese Sliwa also came to attend the Patriarchal Council. I had met him in March 1990 when I was attending the Church Synod in Bagdad. He is nearly one-and-a-half year younger to me. He was made Metropolitan of Iraq in 1981 by H. H. Mar Dinkha IV.

He is a computer expert. He is scanning the three-volume prayer book called *Hudra* (about 4,000 pages) and correcting the errors in order to print a new edition of it. He has got in Bagdad all such facilities.

Russia is his new additional jurisdiction. He is building a Church in Moscow. He ordained deacons in Russia and is trying to activate our Church for the Assyrian people living there,

Mar Meelis Zaia

Mar Meelis Zaia is the bishop of Australia and New Zealand. I had first met him in 1989 in the Supreme Court of New South Wales in Sydney. Then I met him in Trichur in January 1991 when the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV had visited India. Then the third meeting was when he accompanied Metropolitan Mar Narsai in November 1995 to effect unity of the two factions in India.

Since the Bishop speaks English better than the Metropolitan, he was the main spokesman. Many times he had to contact the Catholicos Patriarch who was in England on his way to Iran from the U. S. A.

Mar Meelis Zaia had just completed 28 years of age when he was consecrated a bishop. Born in Bagdad in 1956, he was ordained a priest while 25½ years old, almost like me. While he was a priest in the U. S. A. he proved himself worthy to become a bishop and was consecrated in Chicago on 21 Oct 84 and was sent to Australia. Later he started a congregation in New Zealand too. Now he has built St. Hormizd Church as well as bishop's house in the suburb of Sydney.

Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia proved his efficiency in getting the "minutes" of the Patriarchal Council on 6th June minutes after the conclusion of the Council in both Assyrian and English languages. Yes, he is the fit person to be secretary of the Synod.

About India

On 6th June 1996 when I was returning from America, the US Congress was voting against the motion to reduce the help to India. 297 members of the US Congress opposed the move to reduce help to India. Only 126 members supported motion in the 435-member US House of Representatives.

Among the 126 Congressmen and women who wanted to reduce help to India 96 were Republicans and 30 were Democrats. Among the 296 who opposed this move 136 were Republicans and 160 were Democrats. This means Democrats are more among the India "friends".

Last year also Congressman Don Burton had moved an anti-India motion in the Congress. It was defeated by a narrow margin of 210 against 191 votes. This shows "Indian friends" in the US Congress are increasing. This means a number of "friends" in one year increased from 210 to 297, while the number of "enemies" decreased from 191 to 126. Can we hope that by next year the number of "Indian friends" in the US Congress would increase?

The *Indian Express* of June 7, 1996 had a jubilant heading to the four-column-news item in the front page,

"Stunning defeat to Burton Bill" Lawmakers turn tide in India's favour."

The newspaper writes :

"In fact, there has never been such a massive and eloquent show of support for India in the US Congress.

Indian officials and the Embassy were understandably ecstatic. The tide has turned ten years ago, we could not dream of winning, let alone by such a margin," said Indian spokesman Shiv Mukherjee ...

I watched in Chicago TV the debate in which Dan Burton was pleading.

"All I am asking is for a cap on aid, not a cut we are our brother's keepers, we should care about human rights in India."

Dan Burton who had similar efforts twice before was describing about human rights violation in India. He said a man's two legs were tied on two different motor cars which moved in opposite directions tearing the man apart. I couldn't believe such a inhuman thing was happening in our country. But at the same time those who opposed Mr. Burton did not deny this allegation. There could be such a stray incident when the police are attacked and provoked by terrorists in Punjab and Kashmir.

Many who opposed argued that since a new government has come in India, the U. S. A should give a chance for the biggest democracy to survive. I watched both men and women, white and black, supporting India. Eva Clayton, Gary Aekerman and others from the

Democrats and Benjamin Gilwan, Carolyn Maloney and other Republicans pleaded for India.

The efforts of Republicans like John Doolittle did little to swell whatever little sympathy the US house of Congress had in favour of Mr. Burton in his venomous attacks on India.

Actually it was a hat-trick to India. Because it was the third year in a row Mr. Burton had brought amendment to the floor of the House and got defeated. The US Congressmen and women were against giving signal to India from America which plays the role of the "world police." The Indian newspaper had printed a second heading to this news. "India-baiter bites dust."

As for human rights violations I will support justice to the powerless people. We should speak out for justice. If there are human rights violations in India or anywhere in the world we should condemn it and help to create a situation where unjust structures and unrivalled powers should be eradicated so that all men and women could live in dignity with dreams for a bright and just future in India, America and everywhere.

Now in the relationship between India and America there is a stumbling block namely C. T. B. T. India is refusing to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as long as the big five (U. S. A., Russia, U. K., France & Germany) did not forswear their bombs. The bomb-owners have no right to ask others like India not to make nuclear experiments. India thinks that the U. S. A. and other bomb-owners are worried about narrowing the gap in nuclear knowledge between the bomb owners and others like India who have no nuclear bombs.

The U. S. Congress may never vote unanimously in favour of India on any issue on India, but they did it in favour of one Indian citizen, Mother Teresa. The Bill was passed in September 1996 by the unanimous vote of 400 and odd members of the U. S. House of Representatives to grant an honorary U. S. citizenship to Mother Teresa.

San Francisco

On 6 June 1996 when I was returning from Chicago to India via San Francisco, the Patriarch asked whether he should inform Archdeacon Nenos Michael to meet me and help me to get into the international flight. Although I said that I could manage myself, as trolleys are available and my baggage is manageable, the Patriarch offered to inform the Archdeacon to meet me at the airport.

Archdeacon Nenos sent a fax to me whether I would like to meet the members of the parish board as they would be in a regular meeting on the evening of Thursday June 6th. He also enquired whether I would have enough time in between my flights to meet other members of the congregation who could come to the Church that evening. I responded positively.

Dr. Robert and Archdeacon Nenos Michael were at the airport to receive me and take me to the Church. When I reached the Church I remembered I had been there 29 years earlier when Rabbi Yuav Jacob of Daly City, a second or third cousin of Mar Abimalek Timotheus, had taken me. At that time I had seen the Church from outside only, as my Metropolitan and the Patriarch Mar Eahai Shimun had developed strained relationship.

St. Narsai parish in 3939 Lawton Street, San Francisco was the parish of the late Patriarch. Some of his relatives are still active in this parish. Archdeacon Nenos Michael has been the priest of this parish for a long time. We were meeting each other for the first time. I knew he had some difficult days in 1973.

The reception upstairs were very cordial and jovial. We were meeting in the "Kids Kollege." The spelling of the word Kollege is not a printer's devil or typist's error. The Church used a spelling which the kindergarten children could easily learn. They will correct it when they grow up, I hope. There are many funny spellings which Americans often use. Nite for night, etcetera.

I talked with them about the history of the Church. I had to struggle hard to determine whether they were interested in the topics I dealt with. I could guess that from their faces they enjoyed it. They expressed their appreciation in a letter they handed over to me: "We, the Archdeacon and Church committee, were so delighted to meet with you this evening. Your presence at our parish in San Francisco was a blessing to all of us. Please accept our modest gift from our Parish as a token of our love for you....."

This letter was signed by Archdeacon Nenos S. Michael, Sargon Warda, Paul Odah, Victor Yoseph, Nahrain Babillo, Don Daniallionia, Jackie Yelda, and Sal Shlimon. There were many others too.

Dr. Robert who was president of the Ashurbanipal Library in Chicago had come with the archdeacon to receive me at the airport. He is a doctor in anaesthesia.

He also teaches modern Syriac in that parish now. He had given me a gift of the *Evangelion* (gospel) lessons to be read in our Churches. This beautiful large-size book was composed on computer and printed by the Church in Chicago in 1987. This book was presented to me in August 1988 when I presented a paper about the Syriac MSS in India. This paper in English was later translated into Assyrian and was published in the magazine of the Assyrian Academic Society, a scholarly periodical.

After relaxing for a few minutes in the Archdeacon's residence, he drove me to the airport. Since it was an international flight I was a bit scared when I realised that most of the passengers had already checked-in. Some of these flights are overbooked. Therefore if a passenger is late he may not get a seat. An "okay" ticket is not okay if the passenger does not report at the counter sufficiently early.

In domestic flights in India, an "okay" ticket is always okay until the last 30 minutes before departure. Other passengers are only wait-listed passengers who will be attended to only after the 30 minutes limit expires. But in international flights over-booking is an accepted practice. If there are 400 seats, perhaps 420 people are given okay. If the airline puts these 20 extra passengers only on waiting list, some will not take the trouble of going over to the airport and wait indefinitely. Therefore if the airline okays extra passengers when some okay passengers are sick or are late in arriving at the airport, the airline will have a full load of passengers as they have okayed some extra already.

The Singapore Airlines flight took off from San Francisco airport after the midnight of Thursday. When we reached Singapore after some eighteen hours of flying with one halt enroute, (I forgot whether it was Hongkong or somewhere else) it was Saturday noon. Friday was lost while crossing the date line.

After spending several hours at Singapore airport by evening I emplaned the Bombay flight of the same airline. By midnight we landed in Bombay (now known as Mumbai) airport.

Doing Qurbana and two baptisms on Sunday morning at the Chapel of the Methodist Centre in Byculla was in a hurry to reach the airport to catch the flight to Coimbatore. My host K. P. Timothy told me that an old man named Lazarus had wanted me to visit him in his house as he was not well.

I was tired. Yet I climbed the steps of his house like a young man. I remember with gratitude that Lazarus was in Bombay airport to see me off 30 years ago while going to New York which was my first experience in the air.

My driver was waiting for me at the Coimbatore airport. We drove to the St. Thomas Church in that city and greeted Deacon Johnson Ignatius Emmatty and discussing about Church affairs we drove off to Trichur, back to work as well as to write a travelogue. It took me more than three months to record these words and to complete this work.

After reaching Trichur I began to ask myself whether I had done justice to the Mesopotamia Light Seminar III

who paid for my travel expense for going over to America. To my relief I received a Report from Lincoln E. Issa who was the Moderator of the Seminar. He writes as follows:

"The worthiness can be assessed from several written comments taken from the Seminar Evaluation Sheets returned by those in attendance.

To Witt:

1, "Mar Eprem was extremely insightful, spiritually moving and knowledgeable in his speech. We thoroughly enjoyed it, and we hope to hear him on other subjects in the near future."

2. "I liked it, since it brings all of us closer together. Keep up the good work."

3. "Mar Aprem was great and very informative to us. We love the unity."

4. "Thank you for your time. We need more of this kind of seminars on a regular basis. God Bless!"

5, "The seminar was checked bad: "No God teachings, No love."

6. "Since the Seminar is mostly for and more Assyrians I would therefore suggest the Seminar be conducted in Assyrian language, or at least 50/50. Thank you very much, and may God richly bless you in this noble cause."

7. "This was very wonderful. I was impressed to know that several denominations were represented—w

keen things to say. Please keep up your wonderful work. The world needs to know of the Church of the East and the wonderful contributions and sacrifices it has given to all Christians today. Our Christian heritage is received from your dedication and sacrifices."

The total effort epitomized the truism: "In serving others, we are served ourselves; in respecting others,..... respected; and in loving..... loved."

Post Script

On Tuesday, 24 September 96, President Bill Clinton of U. S. A. signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (C. T. B. T.) at the United Nations in New York. The other declared nuclear powers, Russia, France, Britain and China also put their signatures to this treaty. India continues in its hesitation to sign C. T. B. T. as long as the existing nuclear weapons are not destroyed. A total of 55 nations signed the C. T. B. T. on the first day itself.

Out of 185 member nations more than half (93) should sign in order to make this Act effective. It is not clear at this stage how soon the C. T. B. T. will come into effect.

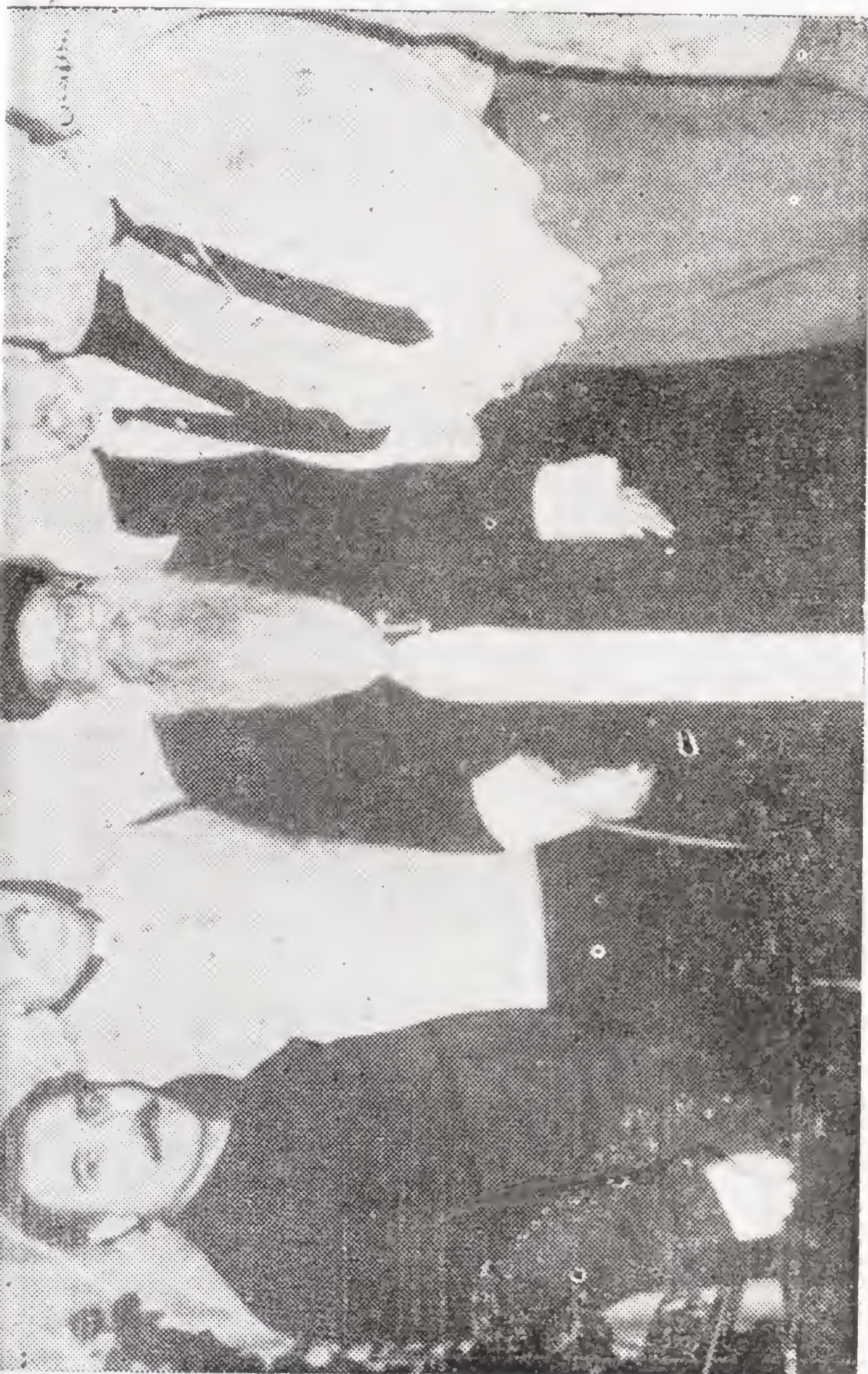


The 18 pilgrims to Israel and Egypt in Oct-Nov 1995. P. K. Devassy and his wife Mary are on the either side of the Metropolitan. The bearded priests are Fr. T. P. Daniel and Fr. O. A. Jacob. Extreme left is Sunny Konikara and on extreme right is Inasu Nallengara.



At the house of George Shaul in Denmark on 1 March 96.
Left to Right : Mar Aprem, Mrs. Brigitte Moeberg, Pastor Yacob &
Rev. Dr. Morton Moeberg.





Qurbana at Aarhus, Denmark on 3 March 96. Deacon Dadeesho,
Casha William Yacob, Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Deacon Albert
Pheneemon, Dávodian (President of the Committee).

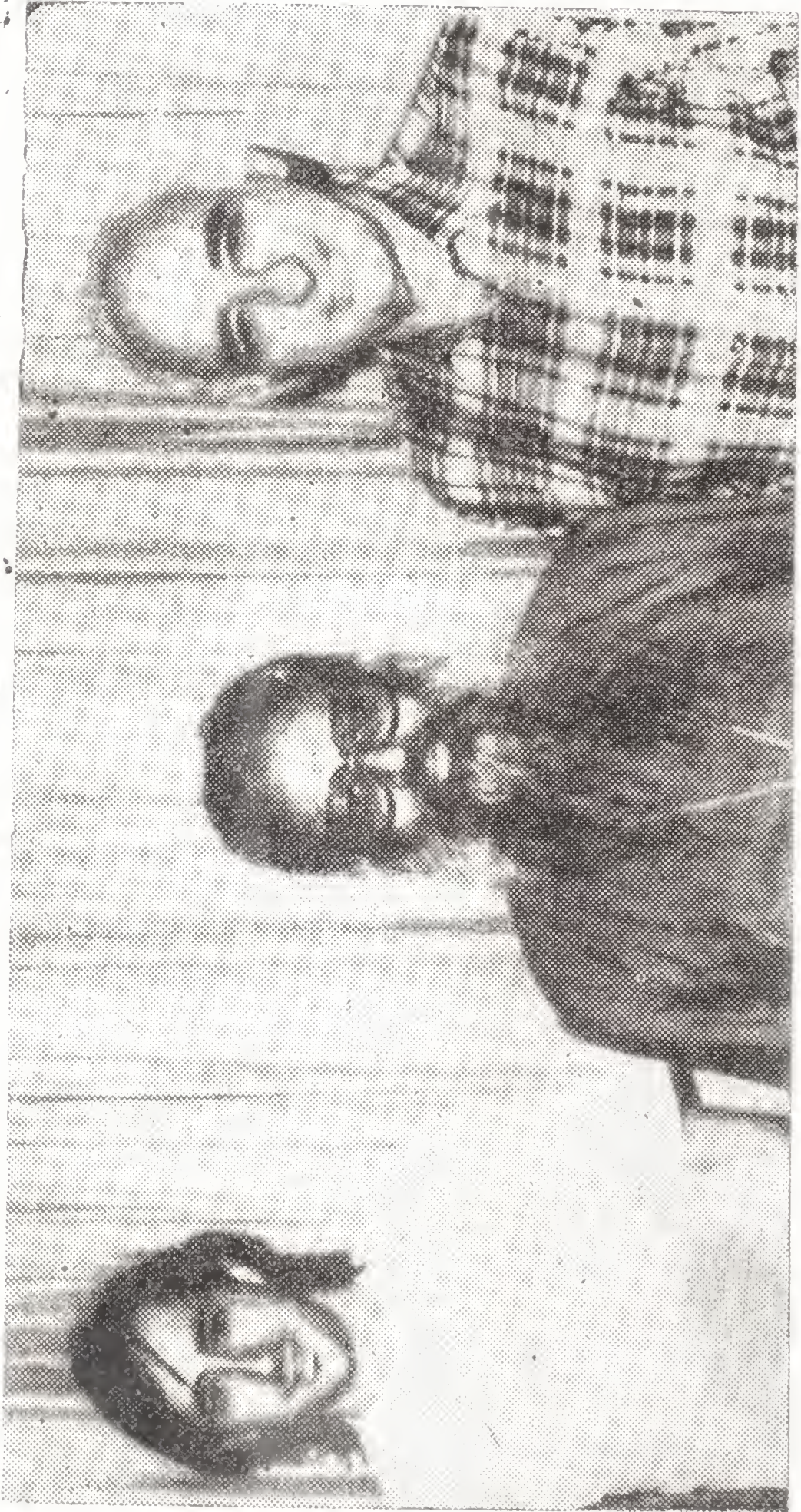


Breakfast after Qurbana at Stockholm on 10 March 1996.
Left to Right : Qaroya Martin Timotheus, Shamasha Zaya, Mar Odisho Orahiam.



Modesto, California

At breakfast after (urbana at Mar Zaia Church on 12 May, 1996. Mrs. Saje Mulaken (left) talks to Miss Miki Mookken (niece of Mar Aprem). Photo taken by Joy Mulakken.



Alex Paul, son of Mrs. Margaret Baba Paul with Mar Aprem in May 1996 in their home in Chicago after the death of 85 year-old Margaret, one of the early



Mr. Timotheus, father of Qaroya (Reader) Martin, with
Mar Aprem in Stockholm, March 1996.



Bishop Mar Odisho Oraham of Sweden presenting a cross to



Mar Aprem Metropolitan giving Qurbana to a child.
Shamasha Samy and Qasha Antwan. 10 March 1996.





After Qurbana at Mar Geevarghese Church in Chicago on 2 June 1996.

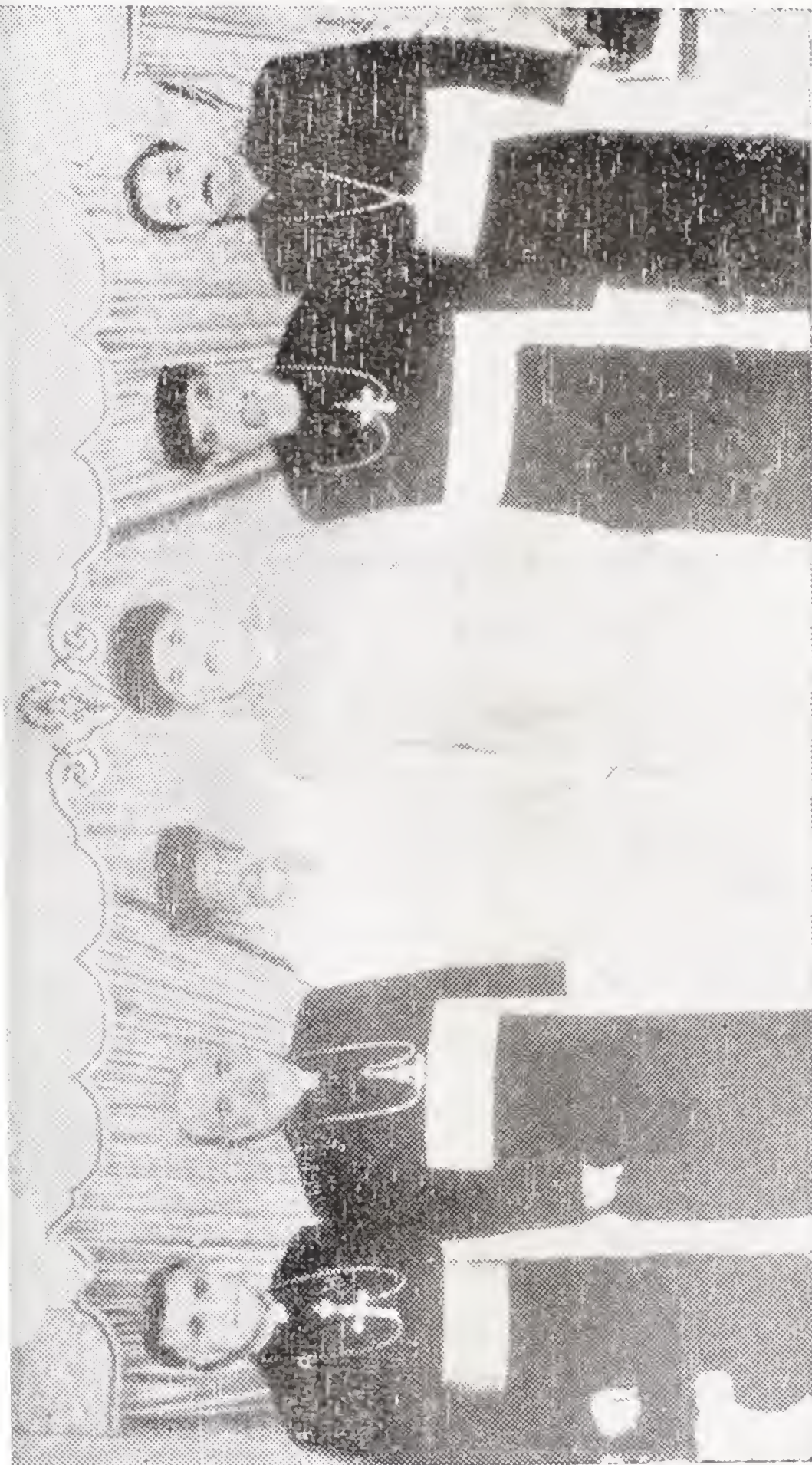
Seated Left to Right: Mar Meelis Episcopa, Mar Narsai Metropolitan,
Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Mar Aprim Episcopa.

Standing L to R. Qasha Shleemun P. Hezekiel, Archdeacon Aprem de Baz,
Qasha Aprim of Syria studying at Mundelin, Chicago.



Prelates with the Indians.

After Qurbana at Mar Geevaighese Church, Chicago on 2 June 1996. Seated Left to Right: Mar Meelis of Australia, Mar Narsai of Lebanon, Mar Aprem of India, Mar Aprim Khamis of U. S. A. Standing Left to Right: Mrs. Ammi...



The prelates who attended patriarchal Council on June 3-6, '96 at Chicago.

Left to Right: Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. Mar Narsai Metropolitan,

Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV,

Mar Geevarghese Sliwa Metropolitan of Iraq,

Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia (Australia)

BOOKS BY Dr. MAR APREM

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| 2 Mar Abimalek Timotheus-A Biography | pp. 282, 1975 |
| 3 Mar Abdisho Thondenat | pp. 136, 1987 |
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| 6 Nestorian Fathers (Out of Print) | pp. 168, 1976 |
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| 8 The Chaldean Syrian Church in India | pp. 241, 1977 |
| 9 The Council of Ephesus of 431 | pp. 196, 1978 |
| 10 Sacraments of the Church of the East | pp. 142, 1978 |
| 11 Nestorian Theology | pp. 183, 1988 |
| 12 Nestorian Lectionary & Julian Calendar | pp. 140, 1982 |
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| 18 Indian Christian Directory | pp. 264, 1984 |
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| 21 From Bagdad to Chicago | pp. 168, 1985 |
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| 23 To Belgium and Holland via UK & USA | pp. 124, 1989 |
| 24 Sydney to Canberra | pp. 128, 1989 |
| 25 The Assyrians in Iraq | pp. 112, 1990 |
| 26 Germany via Vienna | pp. 140, 1991 |
| 27 Washington to New York | pp. 133, 1992 |
| 28 London to Moscow | pp. 134, 1993 |
| 29 Los Angeles To Tokyo | pp. 136, 1993 |
| 30 Oxford to Austria | pp. 144, 1994 |
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34	Laugh with the Bishop (Bombay)	p.p. 95,	1988
35	Laugh to Health (C. L. S., Madras)	p.p. 82,	1992
36	Holy Humour	p.p. 104,	1993
37	Joy to The World	p.p. 104,	1994
38	Holy Smile		

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39	From Relief to Development A profile of CASA	p.p. 282,	1979
40	Teach Yourself Aramaic (Reprint 1993)	p.p. 152,	1981
41	Behold the Cross of Calvary	p.p. 152,	1987
42	Sermons from the Gospels Vol. I	p.p. 208,	1988
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44	The Nestorian Canon Law	p.p. 120,	1995
45	Mesopotamia Light	p.p. 128,	1993

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50	Assyrian Fathers		
51	Syriac Manuscripts in India		
52	Poems & Prayers		
53	Advanced Aramaic		
54	Voice of the East (Editorials)		

MAP OF ISRAEL

